SPECIAL COLLECTORS EDITION! – LAST ISSUE EVER!!!!

PC Accelerator

games, girls, gags . . . gone

it's over.

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JUNE 2000 the last one

imagine MEDIA WITH PASSION

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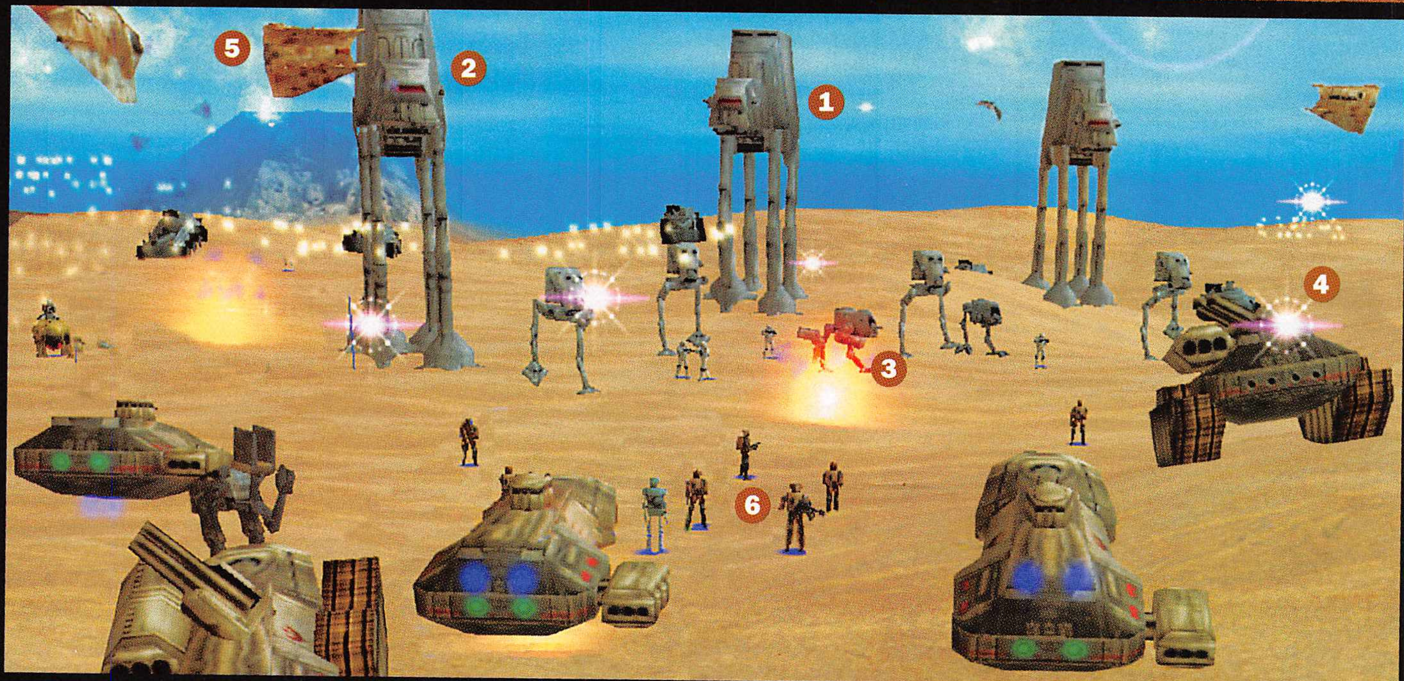

Battle of Tatooine

EXALTED HERO OR FORGETTABLE

That heavy feeling on your shoulders is called the burden of command. Get used to it. With real-time ground

TEEN
T
CONTENT RATED BY
ESRB

1

General Veers

Served: Battle of Yavin, Battle of Sarapin, Battle of Ruul, Battle of Hoth (wounded), Battle of Endor, Battle of Tatooine (captured).

2

2nd Lieutenant Gorga

Served: Battle of Yavin (wounded), Battle of Hoth, Battle of Abridon, Battle of Coruscant, Battle of Endor, Battle of Tatooine (killed).

3

Sergeant Krung

Served: Battle of Hoth, Battle of Abridon, Battle of Coruscant, Battle of Endor, Battle of Tatooine (missing in action).

4

Sergeant Major Corillon

Served: Battle of Yavin (wounded), Battle of Sarapin (wounded), Battle of Coruscant, Battle of Endor, Battle of Tatooine (killed).

5

Lieutenant Major Antilles

Served: Battle of Yavin, Battle of Sarapin, Battle of Ruul (wounded), Battle of Coruscant, Battle of Endor, Battle of Tatooine (wounded).

6

1st Lieutenant Spiker

Served: Battle of Abridon, Battle of Coruscant, Battle of Endor, Battle of Tatooine (promoted).

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attles on numerous worlds, you're just a proton torpedo away from victory. Or defeat.

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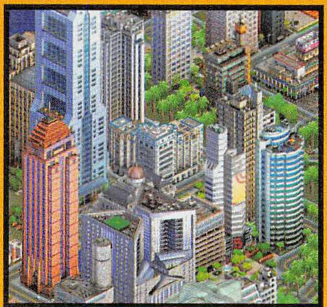
Go to **http://pcxl.ign.com/gaming411**: Product Number 72



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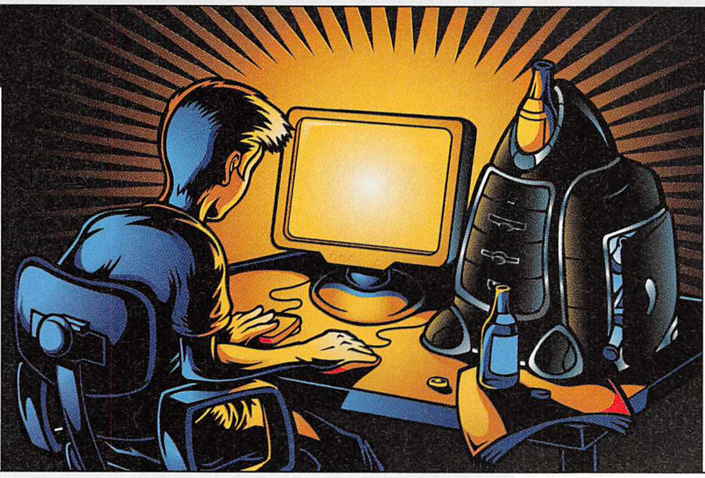
JUNE 00

FEATURES

14

~~10~~, ER, 9 "HOT" GAMES

This section was originally slated to be 10 "hot" games. However, a few nights ago, Mike's mother stumbled into the office with some really good crack, and well ... we just couldn't resist. So, in the spirit of laziness and incompetence, **PCXL** brings you the truly ass-tonishing feature: Nine Great Games! Oh, and we have some pictures of a hottie in a cat suit, if you're interested in that type of thing



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IF WE RAN THE GAMES INDUSTRY

Month after month we shell out dollars for new games and better equipment, and month after month we have the same old complaints. Tired clichés, bad graphics, and dodging pedestrians. We all hate them, but our complaints seem to be falling on deaf ears. This month we, and our readers, speak our minds. We came here to do two things: Drink delicious Black Star beer and complain. Looks like we're about out of Black Star

DEPARTMENTS

TECHPHILES 63

PCXL takes aim at the Guillemot Fortissimo and Diamond MX-400 sound cards, hardware news from this year's GDC, plus, we do beer bongs from the Interactive Seating Hunsaker Battle Chair

PLAY BY PLAY 84

An in-depth investigation of new endorsement opportunities for athletes without a clean background. And, Eurotrash racing games, crotch-rockets, and a hard look at what could be the best baseball game ever made

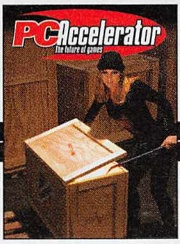
STRATEGY 88

Atten-hutt! It's time for you miserable vomit weasels to get off your pathetic asses and learn how to play *Soldier of Fortune*. For those who don't know, our very own amphetamine-addicted drill sergeant Matt Holmes gives you the lesson you crave

ONLINE ARENA 92

Gaming online with *10-Six*, another slew of new methods to annoy people online, and Limey vs. The Coconut Monkey duke it out

If you like our lovely lifestyles editor Gia DeCarlo, and you like Pussy, skip directly to page 98



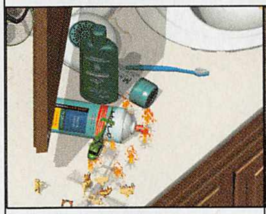
ORGINALLY ON THE COVER
We dressed up a hottie in a catsuit and took pictures of her in a cold (if you know what we mean) warehouse. This strenuous shoot required a crack team of experts including: Sabrina of Boom Models as the hottie, Jack Hutcheson providing the photography, Eric Smith directing, "Terrence" applying the heavy eye make-up, and Emily B (also of Boom Models) stylin' up the babe

MONEY SHOTS

50 MONEY SHOTS
Tons of funny pictures and a few retarded captions. Just add bread and you've got yourself a crap sandwich!

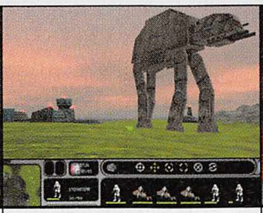
REVIEWS

68 SOLDIER OF FORTUNE
Grab your guns and aim for the balls, Raven's *Soldier of Fortune* ain't soft

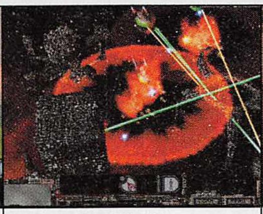


71 ARMY MEN AIR ATTACK
The little green bastards are back, but does anyone really give a crap?

72 THIEF 2
In the interest of a more moral society, Eidos teaches us all how to become better thieves

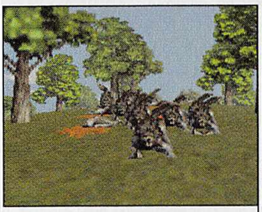


74 FORCE COMMANDER
Just when you thought it was safe to leave your house ... more tired Star Wars crap



76 STAR TREK ARMADA
Live strong and decimate, the Klingon way

80 DIE HARD 2
A game about autoerotic asphyxiation. What'll they think up next?



81 M&M8: DAY OF THE DESTROYER
Y'aaar matey, 3DO's scurvy schemes will earn them but a one way trip ...to tha boneyard!

82 LAST CALL
Finally, a game that actually increases your loneliness, instead of simply dulling it

PC Accelerator
bigger, better, faster games

ARE ANY OF THESE LADIES YOUR MOTHER?
A tribute to mothers everywhere — especially really hot mothers who have appeared in porno movies. Why, you ask? Because even though these ladies have turned to pornography to support their offspring, they still love their children — and just think how much it would suck if your mother was a porn star? Thanks moms!

X-TRA 94-101

It's the funniest damn section in any magazine, ever made in the history of mankind — or at least that's what we keep telling ourselves

GRANDMA STILL DOESN'T UNDERSTAND "COMPOOTERS"
95

The only interviewee ever to wear pink polyester in the storied history of **PCXL**. What, if anything, is going through her little mind?

WOMEN WE LOVE TO PLAY
97

Cover model Sabrina gives us a look at her "other" side and we try desperately to connect her to games in one way or another — it's at least fun to watch us try

GIA ON PUSSY!
98

Gia has some advice for Tony Soprano on how he should have handled Pussy. Gia's insight is only surpassed by her beauty

CHACHI OF THE MONTH
99

Is their a better Chachi than Scott Baio? Discover the answer right here! Also learn how other, more corrupt, magazines operate

... AND SO MUCH MORE
Don't forget about Fantasy Frag, Game Killer, Classifieds, Gamescan, What The Hell?, Heat-O-Meter, Power Meter, Developer Spotlight, and the best sideways writing ever

COLUMNS

EDITOR'S LETTER 8
Once again Mike is blathering on about something or other, trying to be funny in his geeky little way. It's like your mother said, "Don't laugh — it will only encourage him"

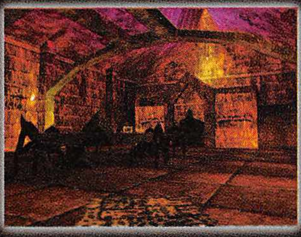
FIRST PERSON 112
Are video games getting out of hand? Jason says, "Will someone please think of the poor, poor children?" Garrett says, "F—k da kidz!"

THE DISC

10
Demos, demos, demos. It might not be as cool as the AOL disc that the Nazi's in our circulation department put in the last issue, but at least we tried

This just in! Reading vertical text increases sexual performance and sideways-reading abilities

Parkinson
'99



A FINAL GOODBYE

WE DID IT OUR WAY

Regrets. We had a few, then again, too few to mention ... (At this point imagine the song "My Way" by Frank Sinatra in the background as images of past issues flash by — and, yes, you should be crying.)

The past two years have been the best time in my life. I've had the opportunity to work with the most talented group of people I've ever been around (of course, I usually hang out with complete losers), and more importantly, I've had the pleasure of working with genuinely good people. Together we made magazine magic, and I am damn proud of every single issue we put out.

We terrorized crap games, appreciated many female figures, took over 100 pot shots at *Daikatana*, illegally used photographs, drank a shitload of beer, wrote 1,540 folio fillers (sideways bits on each page), mentioned Pamela's breasts 18 times, insulted flappy-headed Canadians on 37 different occasions, made up at least 35 new words, insulted and/or offended pretty much every type of person on the face of the Earth, made you laugh out loud at least once an issue, and pretty much wrote whatever the hell was on our crackified, more-than-slightly-deranged, minds. More than anything, we never gave in to "The Man" and, I'll be damned if we didn't have a fucking blast. I want to thank all of you for joining us. The spirit of **PCXL** will live on forever. Check out dailyradar.com and keep your eyes on other Imagine Media publications and you may just find something even better than **PCXL**. Our loyal subscribers will be receiving **PC Gamer** now and with Rob "get off my crack pipe you jammy git" Smith at the helm, you know it's going to get even better. Best of luck, and remember to have some fun — life (and magazine life cycles, apparently) are just too damn short.

MIKE SALMON, *Editor in Chief*

THE TEAM

EDITOR IN CHIEF

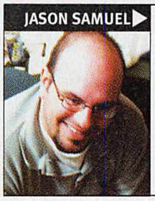
MIKE SALMON

E-MAIL ···› mike@pcxl.com
WHERE HE'S GOING ···› Heading up a new project at dailyradar.com, check there soon and we guarantee you'll know it when you see it
PARTING SHOT ···› "People are stupid, and stupid people rule the world. Thanks to the morons of the world who can't understand creativity, sarcasm, and irony, we have just finished our last issue of PCXL
PS: F—k You!"

SPOTTHEFAKEAD

Find the ad in PCXL that seems less than right and mail it to imnofool@pcxl.com to qualify for absolutely nothing. Hell, we're out of business. What do you want? Our kidneys?
MAY FAKE AD ···› *Age of Consent II: The Age of Kink*
MOCKING ···› Our obsession with pretty young thangs
JUNE FAKE AD ···› *Bloodulator 3000*
MOCKING ···› "Extreme" gaming devices, gory games, and insanely stupid peripherals. (We kind of had to tell you this month's fake ad here since there won't *be* a next month.)

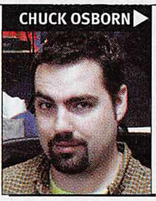
EXECUTIVE EDITOR



JASON SAMUEL

E-MAIL ···› jason@pcxl.com
WHERE HE'S GOING ···› dailyradar.com as PC Executive Editor. Having already worked on GamePen.com, Games.net, and Game-ProWorld.com, websites and games are something he just can't leave
PARTING SHOT ···› I hate to be selfish but, two frickin' months away from the web and they shut down the magazine! Sheesh, of all the damn luck. And none of you even got a chance to meet Devil Fork

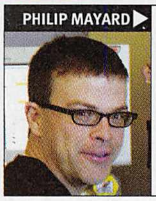
ASSOCIATE EDITOR



CHUCK OSBORN

E-MAIL ···› chuck@pcxl.com
WHERE HE'S GOING ···› Like any good sidekick, Chuck will be the Andy to Mike's Conan at dailyradar.com. Expect innovation, hilarity, and something you would never think of expecting to expect
PARTING SHOT ···› "As time passes I believe people will really look back on **PCXL** as pure genius — maybe if we all died in a horrible plane crash it would even be considered 'art'"

MANAGING EDITOR



PHILIP MAYARD

E-MAIL ···› philip@pcxl.com
WHERE HE'S GOING ···› To tread the perilous waters of some other far less cool gaming magazine as their Managing Editor. God help him ...
PARTING SHOT ···› OK, so I couldn't give a rat's ass if *Quake* is better than *UT* — I still think this was a pretty cool rag (sniff, sniff). But it's like I always say, "It's not a real party till someone cries," and this most certainly WAS a party

ASSISTANT EDITOR

GARRETT KENYON

E-MAIL ···› garrett@pcxl.com
WHERE HE'S GOING ···› To Korea, where he will work on opening his new restaraunt: "T.G.I. McFistf—k's Family Funatopia"
PARTING SHOT ···› Sure I'm upset that I turned down a higher paying job to work here. But don't cry for me Argentina, I'm sure there are plenty of companies out there that will pay me for being an offensive, lazy, beer guzzling, paint huffing, smartass with an amputee fetish. Cheers!

ASSOCIATE EDITOR

MATT HOLMES

E-MAIL ···› matt@pcxl.com
WHERE HE'S GOING ···› Straight to Jupiter, where he'll drink and pick up chicks until he forgets the horror of **PCXL**'s closing.
PARTING SHOT ···› The gaming industry is the future of art. Sure, business jokers will always be around to suck the lifeblood from artists, but that's the nature of things. Workng in this industry is simply a labor of love – unless you're a goddamn vampire like the bastards who shut this outfit down

INTERN/MODEL/FASHION COORDINATOR

GIA DECARLO

E-MAIL ···› gia@pcxl.com
WHERE SHE'S GOING ···› Oddly enough, she seems to follow Mike wherever he goes ... so expect to see Gia making more lovely appearances at dailyradar.com in the very near future
PARTING SHOT ···› "People always asked if I was offended by **PCXL**. Hell no! The guys are great writers with an incredible sense of humor and they were always perfect gentleman — except for Matt, of course."

ART DIRECTOR

ERIC SMITH

E-MAIL ···› eric@pcxl.com
WHERE HE'S GOING ···› Off to a new publication called *Games Insider*, which will cover PC, PlayStation, Dreamcast, N64, GameBoy and NeoGeo Pocket ... wait – no Mac games! What's the deal? Can't we just get one frigging Mac gaming magazine? Why the damn discrimination? Don't you people know **PCXL** and most other mags are put together on Macs!?! Argghh!!
PARTING SHOT ···› "People are stupid"

MASCOT

LIMEY

E-MAIL ···› limey@pcxl.com
WHERE HE'S GOING ···› Lucky for him, wisecracking lima beans are a hot property in the media these days. We're desperately trying to sign him on for dailyradar.com, but we expect a celery dispute of some kind could cause problems
PARTING SHOT ···› "Screw You!"

www.DailyRadar.com

Please enjoy the bitterness dripping off every page of this final **PCXL**

PC Accelerator
bigger, better, faster games

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Gerry Serrano	our little art helper

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(~~*PC Accelerator*~~, *Games Business, PSM: 100% Independent PlayStation Magazine, Next Gen, PC Gamer, Official Sega Dreamcast, Games Insider*)

Imagine Media Inc is part of The Future Network. The Future Network serves the information needs of groups of people who share a passion. We aim to satisfy their passion by creating magazines and websites that offer superb value for their money, trustworthy information untainted by outside commercial influences, multiple ways to save time and money, and are a pleasure to read or visit (much like **PCXL**, but sometimes the above statements are just made to make us feel good). This simple strategy has helped create one of the fastest-growing media companies in the world. We publish more than 99 magazines, 19 magazine websites, and a number of web networks from offices in five countries. The company also licenses 41 magazines in 30 countries. The Future Network is a public company quoted on the London Stock Exchange (symbol: FNET – Buy! Buy! Buy!).

Welcome the the little print that could ... make you a million dollars. Mike has one final "just might be crazy enough to work" business idea. Investors send funds (and hurry) to **mike@pcxl.com**.

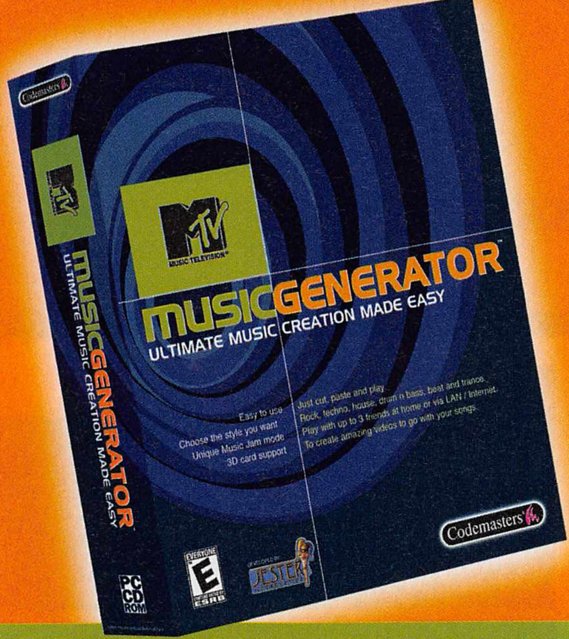
PC ACCELERATOR

What it is: A gaming magazine with an irreverant tone, hilarious articles, in-depth gaming information, hot chicks, and a no BS attitude gamers are sure to love. The mag will be like a combination of the best parts of *MAD Magazine*, *Maxim*, and *PC Gamer*. It'll have sideways writing on every page, a wacky lima bean mascot, a sexy editor named Gia, and the world's most talented editorial staff.

Why it works: Those who aren't ignorant, will absolutely love the magazine and read every page of every issue.

Why it doesn't: Not enough people in the world fit into the category of "not ignorant," and the magazine will likely close down after 21 issues — despite the pleas of its fanatical following.

HARD AS HELL.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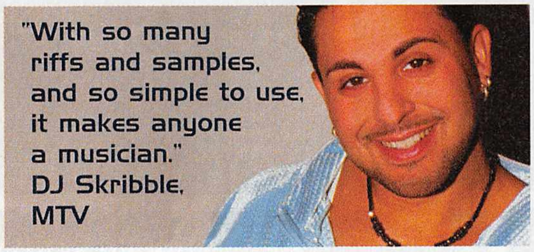

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> DJ Skribble,
> MTV

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JESTER INTERACTIVE

SCREW THE BEACH

HOT FUN IN THE SUMMERTIME

We had our first truly hot days this week, and we're sweating like a pedophile at an N'Sync concert. It's hot. Damn hot. Just outside the **PCXL** offices we watched the usual crowd of picketers thin out as one after another keeled over from heatstroke. Fortunately for us, we have two weapons that help us beat the heat: Air conditioning and sexy bikini models. Oh yeah, and demos. Demos of games like *Half-Life Opposing Force* and *Need for Speed: Porsche Unleashed* help us forget the unbearable temps. Late nights were for realtime strategy sessions with *Earth2150, Force Commander*, and *Sudden Strike*. Just before we became dangerously overstimulated, we loaded up *Last Call* and virtually drank ourselves to death. As far as we are concerned, it might as well be winter.

Summer fun:

"SUMMERTIME" — THE FRESH PRINCE

SWEAT FACTOR ···> It's old and goofy, so if anyone hears you play this, you're better off pretending it's just on the radio.

COOL BECAUSE ···> When you're chillin' on the porch with a beer, this is definitely a choice soundtrack selection.

BUFFY SUMMERS – SLAYER

SWEAT FACTOR ···> One word: Sarah-Michelle Gellar (three really, but who's counting?)

COOL BECAUSE ···> Making a show with a name like "Buffy the Vampire Slayer" good is tougher than getting Matt Holmes a girlfriend.

SUZANNE SOMERS – THIGHMASTER

SWEAT FACTOR ···> It wasn't her thighs that forced us to endure the torturous antics of the "Three's Company" cast.

COOL BECAUSE ···> She's like the "Terminator of Ta-ta's." Those jugs will never give up (however they will sag down to her shins over time).

LEGEND ·····>

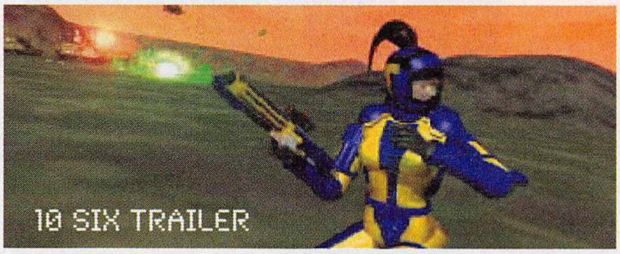
D DEMO	A/V	TOOLS
PATCHES	MAPS	? RATING

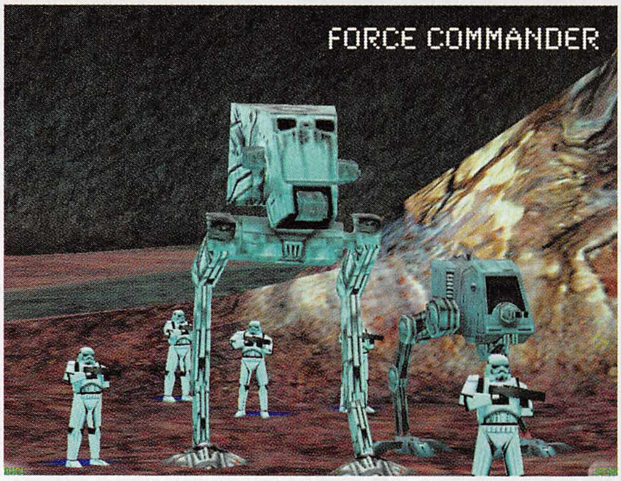
DEMOS

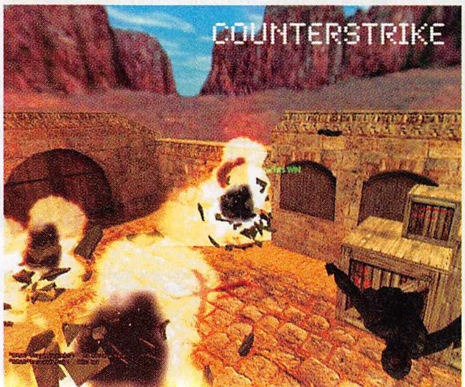
- D EARTH2150
- D LAST CALL
- D NEED FOR SPEED: PORSCHE UNLEASHED
- D ROLLCAGE 2
- D FORCE COMMANDER
- D SUDDEN STRIKE
- D TACHYON
- D HALF-LIFE: OPPOSING FORCE

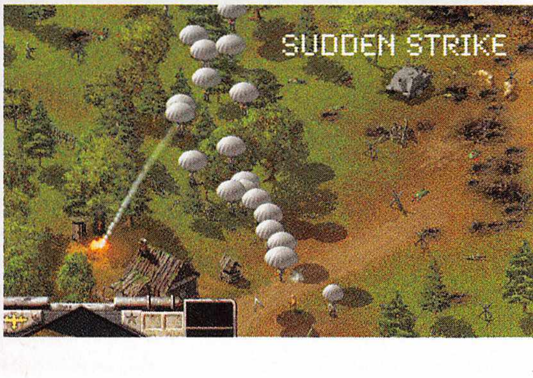
X-TRA

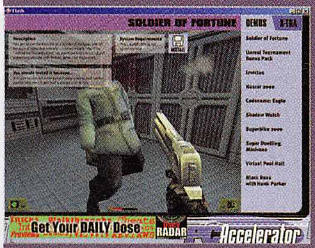
- COUNTERSTRIKE BETA6.1
- QUAKE 3 FORTRESS BETA1











When you click on X-tra, you are answering yes to the question "Am I an adventuresome little devil?"

The **PCXL** disc interface transforms once every 20 days. It becomes bigger, better, and faster so that readers like you who actually read tiny text like this get your money's worth. Notice that we have given the menu system Star Trek-like simplicity.

REQUIREMENTS: WINDOWS 95/98, PENTIUM 133MHZ, 32MB RAM, DIRECTX 5.0, MOUSE, 100% SOUND BLASTER COMPATIBLE CARD

THE DISC MINI-FAQ

Q: Why don't you use autorun on the damn disc?

A: Real men don't need to have silvery plastic things wait on them hand and foot. They can run executables unaided. Amazing ain't it?

Q: Where are the nude pics of your babelicious cover models?

A: After you pass through the 16th chamber of **PCXL** Shaolin, you are offered the opportunity to challenge Eric in a battle of skills. If you can defeat him at Mastermind, Candyland, and Jenga! then — and only then — are you allowed to view the hot nudies.

Q: I thought you said you'd never put the *Earth2150* demo on the disc! What happened?

A: They sent large suitcases of money. Disc editors are not the strongest of people. You figure it out.

Q: I want the second disc! Where is it?

A: There is in fact a second disc. It is packed with the most amazing game demos and nude shots we could get our grubby hands on. It's got lists of credit card numbers and the home phone numbers of the most current supermodels. We ship it out with every disc issue — but it's such a hot item, it never seems to make it to you. It's a damn shame, too.

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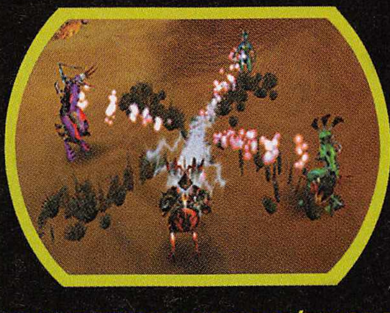

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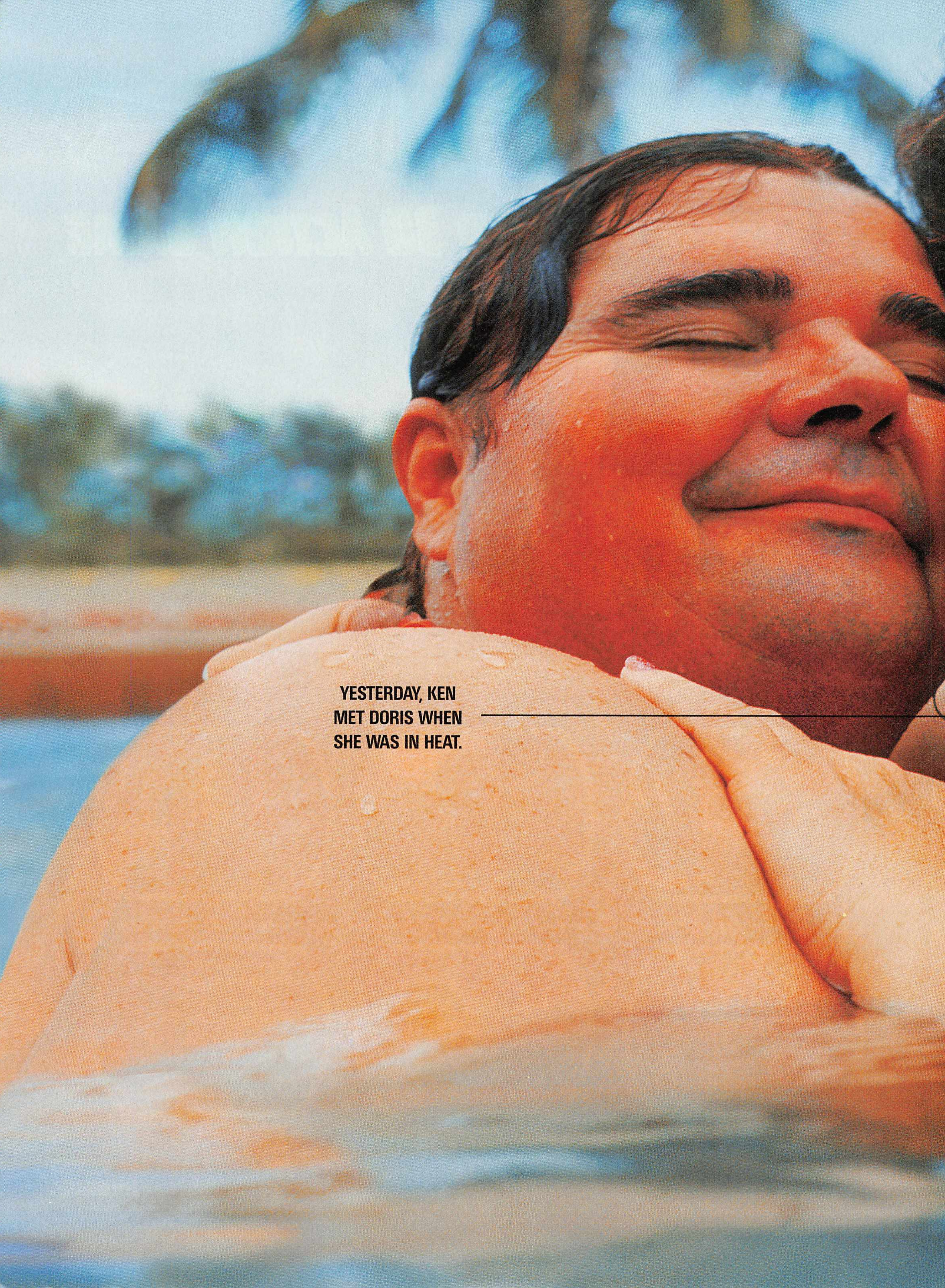
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FREE-LANCER

The latest brainchild of Chris Roberts could possibly be the best looking game ever

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MAX PAYNE

GOD aims to redefine the first-person shooter genre with "photorealistic" graphics

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HALO

It made our cover last month — that should tell you something. We're not sure what, but something

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NFS: MOTOR CITY

Hot chicks, hotrods, fast play ... sounds like porn, but it's really a racing game

32

C&C RENEGADE

All the characters and buildings from the first one, only this time in 3D

Hot Games

For those of you not dialed into the computer gaming industry on a 24/7 basis like us, you might not know that the biggest event of the year is the Electronic Entertainment Expo, held in Los Angeles this year. It's at E3 that the developers and publishers show off everything they have like cheap hookers and we attempt to drink ourselves into oblivion for the few days we can get away from slaving at the computers to bring you this fantastic magazine. Now, some of you will get information on the event from the myriad of webzines out there that work their asses off to bring you day to day coverage from the event. But we're smarter.

Instead of busting our chops at the event, we decided to send in the **PCXL** P.I. to get information on the games that are going to rock E3 ahead of time. She went in and stole the information we needed from these unsuspecting companies, using means only privy to a select few — come on, look at that outfit. The result is a list of titles that all have the potential to kick your ass. From action to RPG to racing, we've got some of the hottest games in production — and we do mean hot — hell, half this shit is stolen! So grab a beer, read the mag and envision yourself at E3 with us.

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DUKE NUKEM FOREVER

Violence & humor: The two things we here at **PCXL** like most (well, liked)

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ALONE IN THE DARK

Either a really cool new game or what you'll be in our offices next week

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POOL OF RADIANCE II

Dungeons and Dragons meets *Baldur's Gate* ... a geek's wet dream!

46

MECH WARRIOR 4

Goodbye cheesy lasers, hello studly beams of death!

Mike Salmon is still working part-time as a gigolo and trying to work his way into The Backstreet Boys

Freelancer

MISSION: "NOT A RAIL SHOOTER"

What's the mark?

Last year when the entire games industry gathered in Los Angeles for E3 the unanimous choice for best game was *Freelancer*. The stunning visuals, rich story, ambient sounds, and pure scope of the game impressed even the most jaded of journalists (that would be **PCXL**), but since then little has been seen or heard — until now. **PCXL** managed to infiltrate the Austin, Texas, offices of Digital Anvil and get a glimpse at one of the games that will soon be stealing your time.

Set for release in March 2001, *Freelancer* is the latest brainchild of Chris Roberts (*Wing Commander, Privateer*). One of the first things you'll notice about *Freelancer* are the visuals — it is absolutely stunning. Only naked pictures of Latitia Caesta would better to gaze upon. It is one of, if not the, best looking games we've ever seen (along with *Halo*). So it's pretty much *Freespace* with a story and better graphics, right? Wrong. *Freelancer* is so much more.

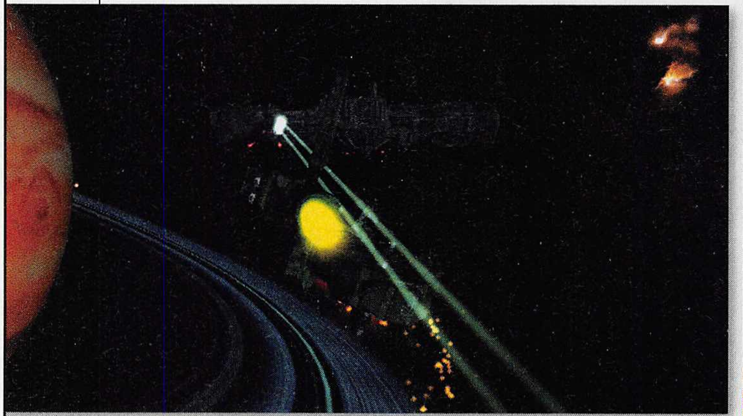
The story will unfold through amazingly cinematic in-engine cutscenes, and will immerse the player in the game much like the *Wing Commander* series. The game begins after the First Solar War has ended (*Starlancer*) and the Four Houses of Humanity rule all known space. The Four Houses are based on different ancient civilizations (British, American, Japanese, and German) and each world (and vehicles in it) has a style that reflects these cultures. However this isn't just a graphical treat. Instead, each civilization has unique ships, abilities, and even tendencies that make trips through space a virtual European vacation.

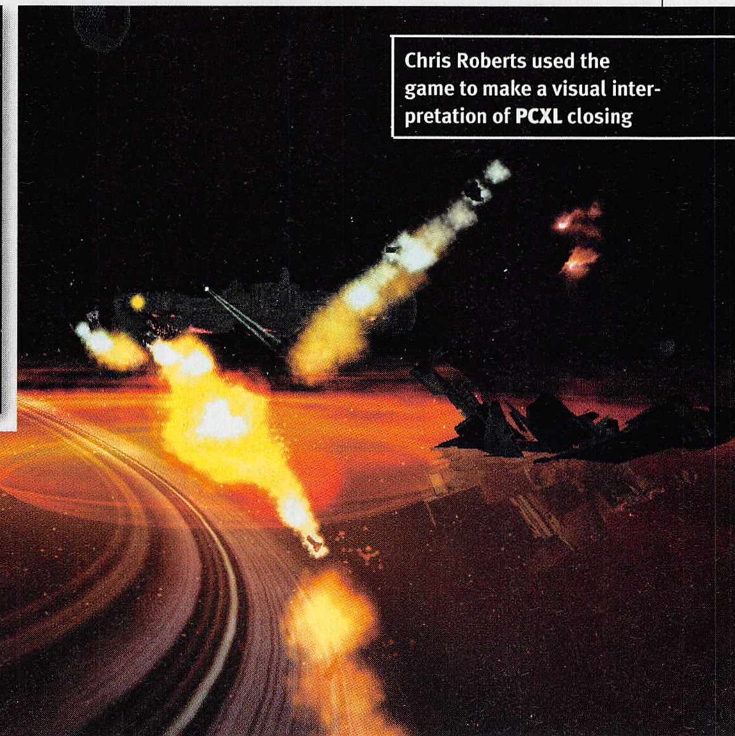
The player takes the role of a mercenary who travels through the elaborate solar galaxy, and visiting bars to pick up various missions. What is amazing about *Freelancer* is that this world is persistent and goes on with or without the player. There is trading, mining, and wars in which you can choose to partake or ignore completely. The tasks you choose and the actions you take will change the way the game plays out. Attack too many Briton cargo ships and you won't be safe in their space again.

As long as you're down there baby ... (zip)

We were skeptical at first, but the autopilot functions (with the freedom to override and fly it yourself at any time) are absolutely brilliant. While the combat and action is stellar it isn't what makes *Freelancer* so exceptional. The emphasis here is on a huge, constantly changing and dynamic universe that operates on predefined rules and not scripts. What this means is that each time you play *Freelancer* entirely different things can and will happen.

For the first time ever in a space game, the backdrop isn't a bitmapped scene of stars or colored nebulas. The world is completely real and you can visit anything you see on screen. Because of the vastness of space and to size of the game world, you will be able to hyperspace throughout the




Chris Roberts used the game to make a visual interpretation of PCXL closing

Freelancer

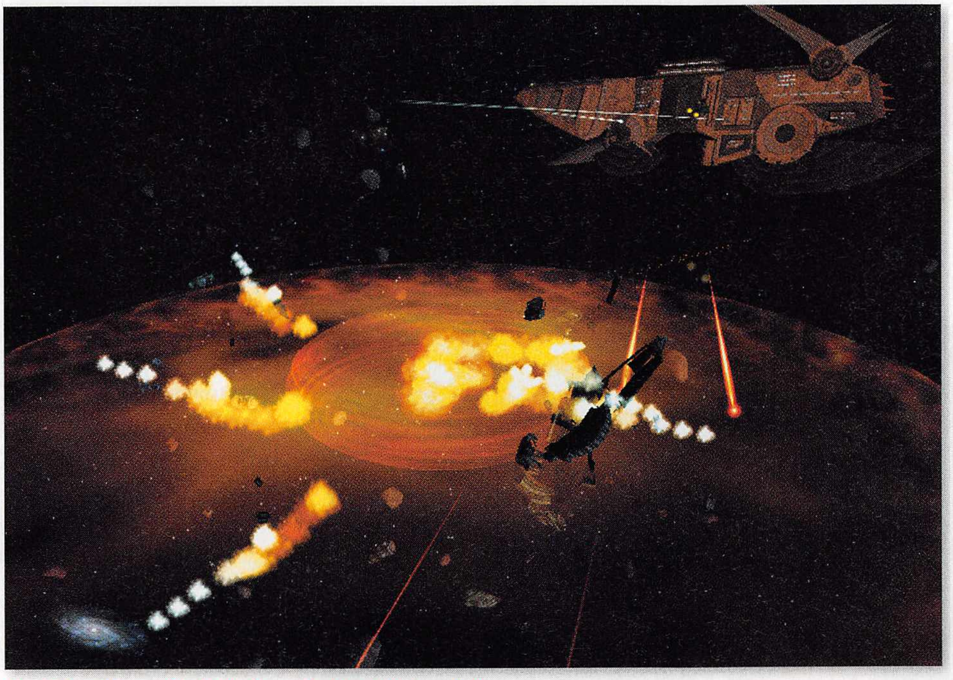
DEVELOPER ···> Digital Anvil

PUBLISHER ···> Microsoft

RELEASE DATE ···> Q4 2000 or later

API SUPPORT ···> Graphics cards

Rob Smith is EIC of *PC Gamer*. This is the second time he's left a mag and it closes within three months



Hey Pete, did you flush the karpolopian toliet again?

world. See a blue nebula in the distance? Click on it and hit hyperspace, and you'll soon arrive in the middle of an eerie gaseous cloud. But it isn't just there for looks — inside the nebula there will be mining stations collecting gas, ambushes from enemy Houses, and anything else the rules of *Freelancer* allows for. From everything we've seen, *Freelancer* is changing the rules and the expectations of games as we speak (er, write).

Where is it?

Digital Anvil is located in Austin, Texas, and was formed by brothers Chris and Erin Roberts. Prior to forming Digital Anvil, the Roberts were the creative minds behind the *Wing Commander* and *Privateer* series. Their new company is developing games for Microsoft, and along with *Freelancer*, they are working on *Starlancer* (now available), *Loose Cannon*, and several "secret" projects likely headed for the X-Box and PlayStation 2. The plush offices include a fully decked-out movie theatre where our spies got a chance to see *Freelancer* in action.

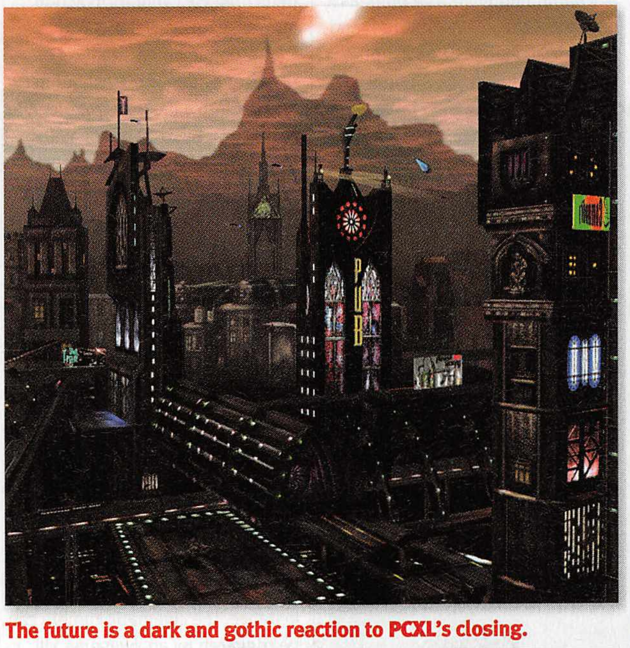
What's the security?

The completely interactive, living world of *Freelancer* isn't going to be an easy accomplishment and if done wrong, it could be disastrous. Additionally, *Freelancer* is trying to make a story-based space shooter that isn't for joystick jockeys. Will people get the unique control mechanism and play mechanics? We certainly hope so, because it looks well worth the effort.

What's the payoff?

The variety in scenery and immersion in the real environment is astonishing, but it still isn't what really makes *Freelancer* so promising. The key to this whole game is the amazing sense of scale and detail. Way in the distance you'll see a giant mothership that is the size of your thumb, as you move closer to the ship, the size continues to increase until you are flying inside of a giant ship. No game has ever done this better.

The best part is that once you get up close to the ship you don't see the blurry textures most games offer. The detail is perfect and it really makes you feel like a tiny flea in a giant universe. There is a reason we picked this as one of the 10, er, nine, best games — it is simply amazing.



The future is a dark and gothic reaction to PCXL's closing.

INSIDER INFORMATION

OUR MAN ON THE INSIDE (CHRIS ROBERTS) PROVIDES THE INSIDE DIRT ON ONE OF THE MOST AMBITIOUS PROJECTS IN GAMING. HIS INSIGHT AND GOALS ARE LOFTY, BUT CERTAINLY ATTAINABLE.

Q: Why did you decide to ditch the usual space simulation controls and include things like autopilot?

A: The control and AI makes flight easy for anybody, not just hardcore joystick junkies. The best part about flying a spaceship around is blowing up other spaceships and too often in space shooters you spend all of your time trying to navigate your ship into a position where you can actually see the enemy. In *Freelancer* we do a lot of that for you so you can focus on the strategy.

Q: What kind of unique things are you planning for combat in *Freelancer*?

A: The combat tends to be a lot more one on one than one on 100, and this allows a great deal of detail in each individual battle. You can target any portion of the enemy ship and deciding whether to take out a power core, missile launcher, or wings is key to battle.

Q: What are the multiplayer plans?

A: We'll have straight deathmatch, where you can choose your ship and go directly into battle. We'll also have co-op for the missions where you and friends can tackle missions together and alter the dynamic world. We also have a massively multiplayer version of *Freelancer* scheduled for Christmas 2000 as a separate game.

Q: What will be the main difference between the massively multiplayer and the single-player *Freelancer*?

A: You can build your character and upgrade ships in *Freelancer*, but in the massively multiplayer version it will be much more detailed. Plus you'll be more involved in trading and mining. It is still a ways off, but we have big plans for a true massively multiplayer space game.

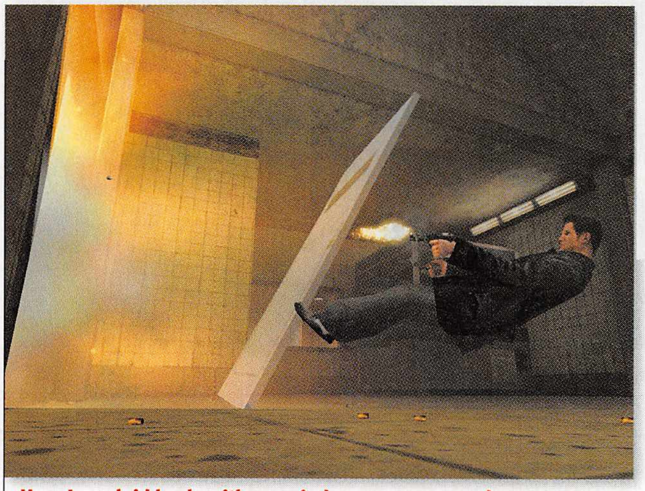
Q: One of the big points at Gamestock that you made was that games needed to have more emotion. How is *Freelancer* making this happen?

A: By catapulting players into a dynamic world that is completely real and introducing character and story through the same engine we can grab hold of the gamer.

Jason's been sucked back into the underwear model trade, underoos couldn't live without his bald head

Max Payne

MISSION: "BRING ON THE PAIN!"



Here I am, laid back, with my mind on my money and my money on my mind.

Max Payne

DEVELOPER ···> Remedy Ent.

PUBLISHER ···> GOD

RELEASE DATE ···> After we're dead

API SUPPORT ···> Probably some graphics cards by Nvidia, or maybe 3Dfx, who knows?

What's the mark?

Gathering of Developers has kept a lid on their super-secret (hence the aforementioned lid) third-person perspective 3D action game since last year's E3. With *Max Payne*, Finnish developers Remedy Entertainment and 3D Realms (of *Duke Nukem* fame), are attempting to redefine a term for first-person shooters and graphics in gaming, "photorealism."

Quite simply, they want to produce graphics so frickin' tight you think you're looking at a photo instead of a video game engine — and that's because in most cases they are actual photos. Take a look at these screens and we think you'll agree they are getting pretty damn close to their goal, though the question must be asked, what the hell has Max swallowed? Guy looks like he wants to take a shit, don't you think?

The game will only offer single-player, because the team wants to focus all their effornst on bringing the player a big budget action movie with a story sensation. Developing a multiplayer side to that would be roughly nine months more of a wait. That said, story is going to be super important; no matter how good the game looks, it's got to pull the player in, especially since GOD wants *Max Payne* to be the next *Duke Nukem*, *Gordon Freeman*, and *Quake* Marine rolled into one.

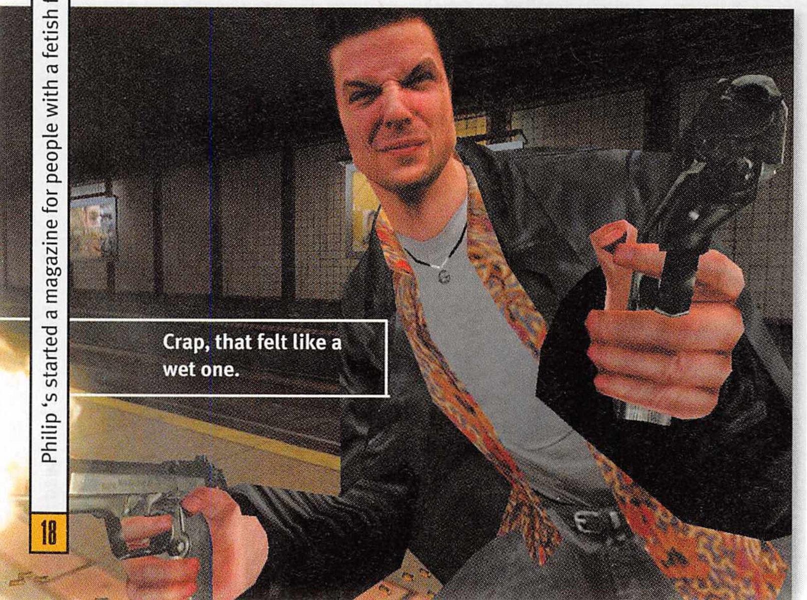
The story begins three years prior to the beginning of the game, as Max grimly discovers his butchered family at home (hate it when that happens). The punk-ass murderers are never captured, and that brutal death acts as a motivating force in his life. Already a cop, and now without a family, Max joins the DEA and turns to highly risky undercover work. He's got a Mel Gibson/*Lethal Weapon*/nothing to lose attitude and intensity. Sure, he's good at his job but he is a loose cannon — he's on the edge and more than a little crazy. We all know what happens to loose cannons in action movies, especially the cop kind — they stumble into a situation or discover evidence they shouldn't and get into a mess of trouble. And that is exactly what happens to Max, just as he's about to break open a huge case, exposing links of criminal corruption leading high up police and government ranks. Max's cover is blown as he's falsely accused of his boss' death. He ends up fighting for his life as the mob, police, and everyone else wants Max captured ... or even better, dead.

The camera isn't going to be from a first-person perspective, but that doesn't mean it's going to be *Tomb Raider* — it's a camera perspective only, not a genre. The view will change depending on the scene and what's happening. For instance, the cinematic camera can be triggered by an awesome kill shot. Just as you squeeze the trigger on a sniper rifle to blow off a guy's head, the camera might jump to a follow the bullet, then move to the side just prior to the guy's head getting shot off.

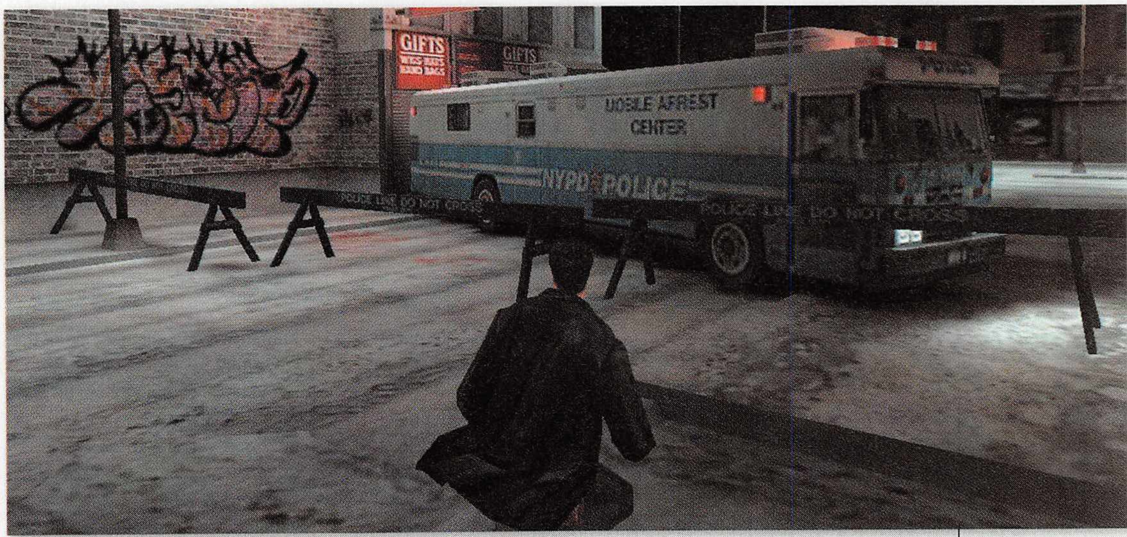
What's more, at times the player will be able to trigger a slow-motion mode. The developers haven't decided on how frequently this could be triggered, but it basically represents the world slowing down as his brain speeds up, due to an extreme situation. Bullets in this mode do more damage, though the enemy bullets do more damage as well. There might be other camera angles hidden in there, but right now 3D Realms and Remedy aren't letting anyone know about 'em.

And how are they getting the engine to look that good, to really get photorealism in their characters? Well, the biggest reason they call it photorealism is because the game isn't drawn by artists — it's photographed by them. Everything in the game comes from a digital picture. That's right, every texture was, at one point, part of a photograph. Currently the only other game that is attempting to do this is *Duke Nukem*, which is also being developed by 3D Realms. If this technique works as well as it appears to be going now, the games industry is heading back to Hollywood.

When will we see this action masterpiece? Well, in true 3D Realms spirit, it will be done exactly "when it's done." Since we are no longer satisfied with this answer, we've decided to set our



Crap, that felt like a wet one.



Wait! Wait! Ah man, my mom is going to kill me for losing that bus.

own release date for the game: March 11, 2001. If the game isn't released by this date, then it will be considered late and we will get "*Daikatana* on their ass."

Where is it?

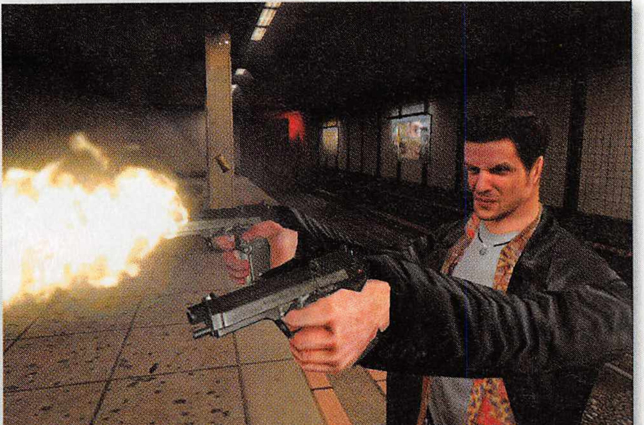
Finland and Texas: A match made in heaven? Remedy is developing the title (i.e., actually coding this bad boy), while the guys from 3D Realms are helping with gameplay, story, and content. We really don't know much about Remedy; some of them have last names like Maatta and Heinilehto (and first names even more bizarre) but we do know about the Texans. 3D Realms are the men behind *Duke Nukem*, so check out our preview (p. 35-36) to find out more about these guys.

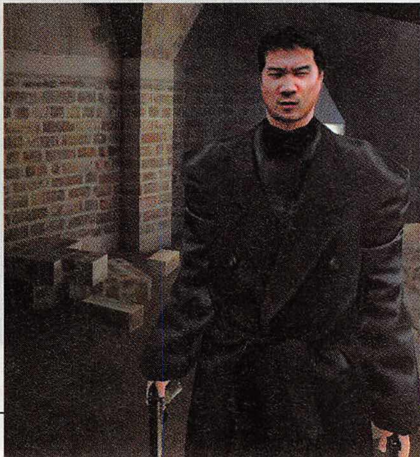
What's the security?

The difficulties these guys are going to face start with the camera — it's hard work pleasing people with a camera for an action game that isn't first-person. Nobody wants to be known as a *Tomb Raider* clone, and the third-person perspective breaks one of the holiest rules of **PCXL** — there should never be anything on a gaming screen that you can't shoot.

What's the payoff?

The biggest hit will be the graphics that make games seem like the movies, as well as a new character in the genre that can hold our attention. Only single-player means they can do it right instead of being spread thin. And with 3D Realms' track record of not releasing crap (or anything at all lately, for that matter), this game looks like a winner.





New on Fox: 90210 Blue Steve, Brandon and the Asian ninja guy.

INSIDE INFORMATION

WE USED THE SPECIAL EUROPEAN VERSION OF THE PCXL P.I. TO BREAK DOWN THE DOORS ON REMEDY ENTERTAINMENT AND BEAT SOME ANSWERS OUT OF THE FINNS. HERE IS WHAT SAM LAKE HAD TO SAY UNDER DURESS.

Q: Who wins in a fight: Max Payne or Duke Nukem?

A: As long as Duke stays out of New York, he should be OK. But seriously, Max and Duke are on the same side. They are two very different protagonists, they live in very different worlds, but both are fighting bad guys, each after his own lovable fashion.

Q: With a name like Max Payne, do you figure he got beat up a lot as a kid? Or was he a bully?

A: It's symbolic, with the deaths of his loved ones, Max has had to go through hell, so he's hurting inside, and before it's all over he'll be hurting outside as well. Pain, both psychological and physical, is a recurring theme in the game. And of course, to all the bad guys who run into him, Max will be a max pain.

Q: Photorealistic graphics: Will they include blood and gore, like a super version of *Soldier of Fortune*?

A: *Max Payne* is not about gore. If you think about it, excess blood and gore in many action games is pretty cartoonlike. We are aiming for a much higher level of realism. Also, our goal is to make the action look good. Buckets of blood and gore are not really part of that equation.

Q: Will the Fins invade Denmark? And how does one really refer to you people? Finnish, Finlandians, Sweden's ugly cousins?

A: You don't really want to get us started on this. It's Finns, with two n's, but our friends usually address us by our first names.

Q: What should every reader know about *Max Payne*?

A: It's a story-driven third-person action game. The thriller storyline is set in crime-ridden Film Noir New York City. Max is a fugitive undercover cop, a man with nothing to lose, out to avenge his murdered family. The action is executed in stylized Hong Kong action movie realism. *Max Payne* is coming from 3DRealms, Remedy Entertainment, and Gathering of Developers.

Carrie Shepherd is really a hot mama now! (She's got a screaming kid and her a/c's broken)

Halo

MISSION: "THE ANGELS SING"

What's the mark?

Halo is the 3D third-person perspective action extravaganza that Bungie Software hopes will vault it into the gaming history books. And we're going to tell ya right now that if the graphics are any indication of the potential of this title, the world had better tremble like a bunch of French girl scouts. Getting information out of Bungie is like pulling teeth out of hippopotamus. It's only because of the dedicated effort of the **PCXL** P.I.'s that we have any information at all. So while we've got good juice, you can expect a lot more in the future.

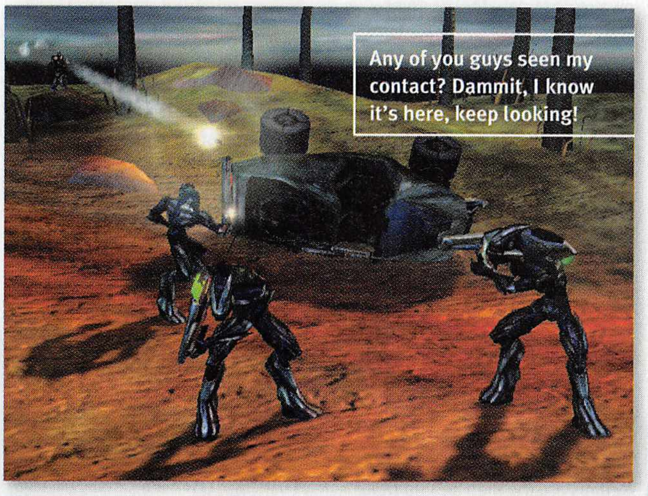
Based on a science fiction story centering around the mysterious *Halo* ring system, the lush backdrop is the setting for one group of humans' last stand. The crew of an escaping human ship discovers, and subsequently crash lands on, what it believes is an abandoned alien-made ringworld. The survivors of the crash are scattered about the ring, and soon begin the process of reuniting and defending themselves against a pursuing alien consortium known as the "Covenant." Of course, nothing is what it seems in this science fiction storyline, so you can expect that whoever made the planet hasn't just left it completely empty. Technology left behind by the creators of the ringworld can drastically change the balance of this small war, perhaps saving humanity itself from the threat of the Covenant.

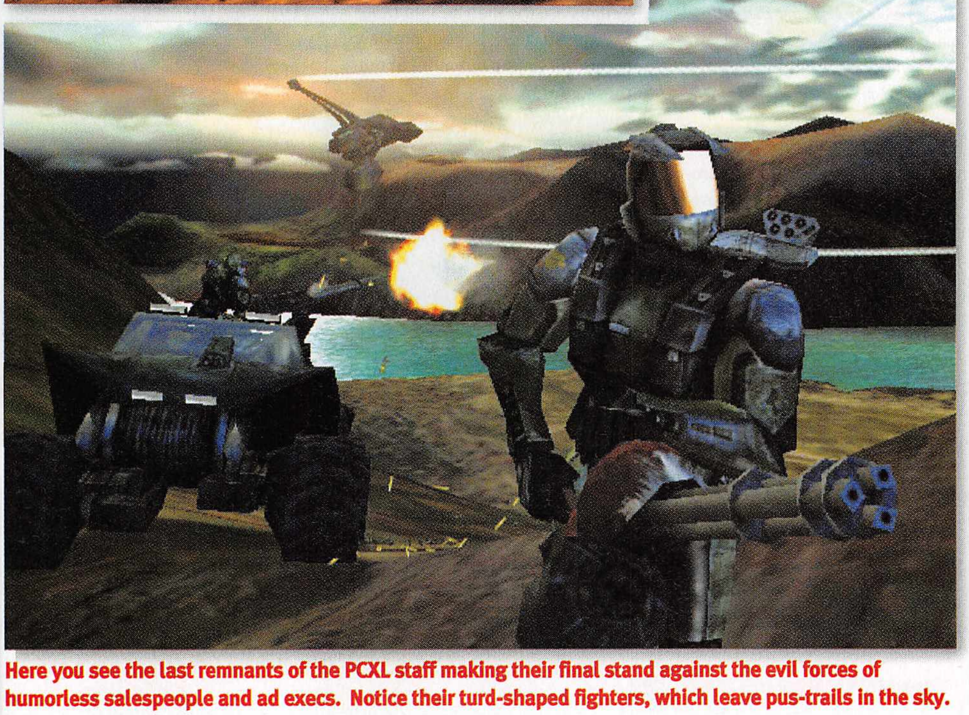
The Bungie team isn't taking any shortcuts and is including both a complete single-player and a devoted multiplayer game as well — a rarity these days. Single-player will focus on an officer from the ship and his part in the struggle the survivors face in order to save themselves and humanity. That's not to say you are alone — this officer will definitely run into other survivors along the way. NPC humans who you'll meet along the way won't be under your control but you will be able to join up and help them in their battles. You can bet those vehicles that have a driver and a gunner aren't just for the multiplayer experience. Nope, you'll do whatever is necessary as battle and missions progress and expect the AI to be alongside you.

(Multiplayer will be run through a *Halo*'ized version of Bungie.net and will focus on teamplay. Our cover story last month detailed multiplayer in *Halo* and how it might just change the future of multiplayer gaming — but we're sure you already read that.)

Whether it sparks a revolution or not remains to be determined. What is readily apparent right now however, is the amazing work Bungie is doing with the graphics engine. Characters at their highest detail are about 2,500 polygons and even more impressive than that is the multilayered texturing on top of those polygons.

The artists over at Bungie have taken this technique and pushed it to what must be the limits. Characters look believable not only because they are 2500 polys, but because the glint of sunlight that reflects off the sci-fi metal of an


Any of you guys seen my contact? Dammit, I know it's here, keep looking!

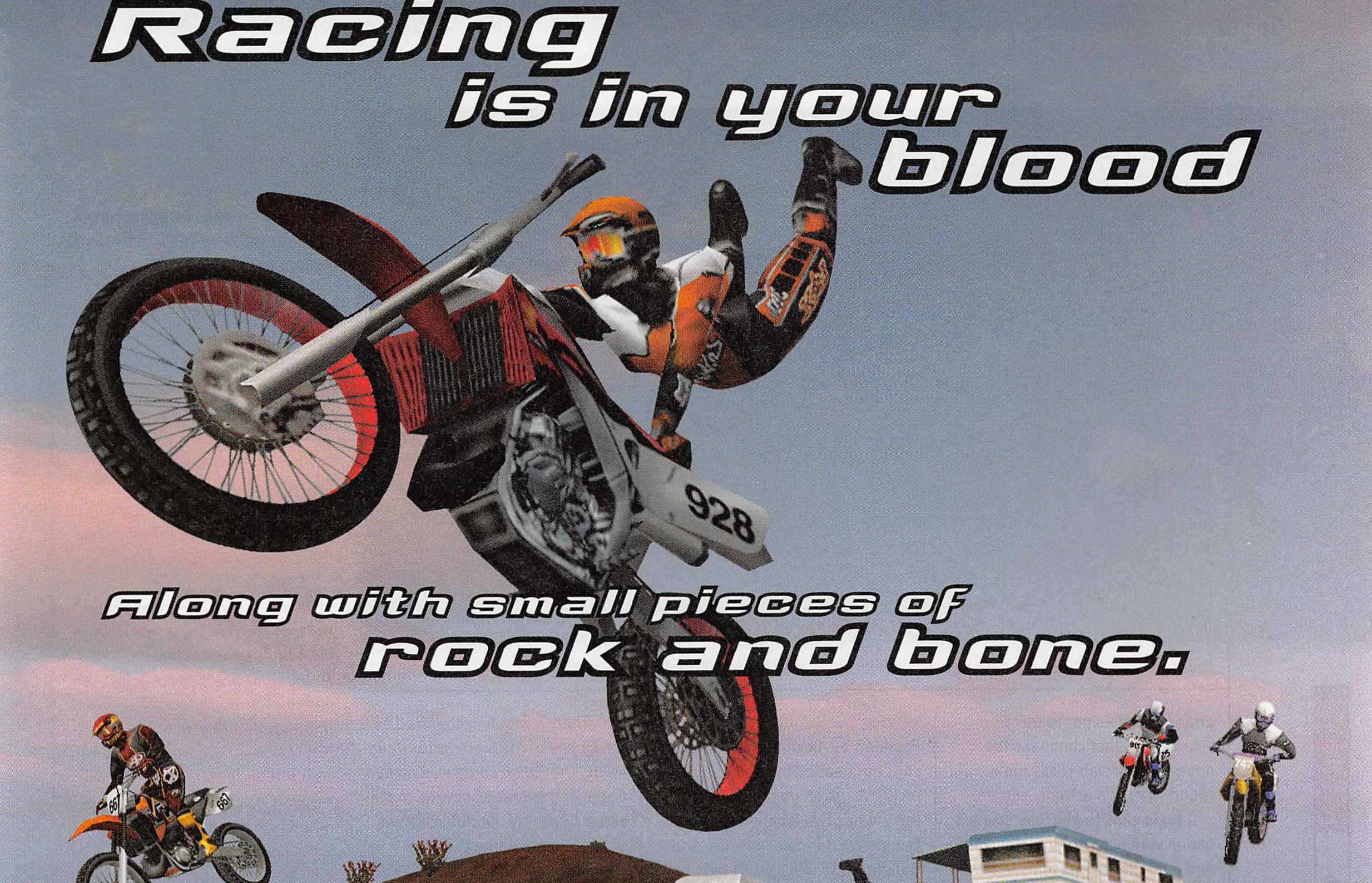

Here you see the last remnants of the PCXL staff making their final stand against the evil forces of humorless salespeople and ad execs. Notice their turd-shaped fighters, which leave pus-trails in the sky.

Halo

DEVELOPER ···› Bungie
PUBLISHER ···› Bungie
RELEASE DATE ···› Later this year
API SUPPORT ···› Yea, Yea, Yea. Look, you need a computer ok?

Chuck is starting a speaking tour on the rigors and history of **PCXL**. Catch him at your local Motel 6!

Actual game footage



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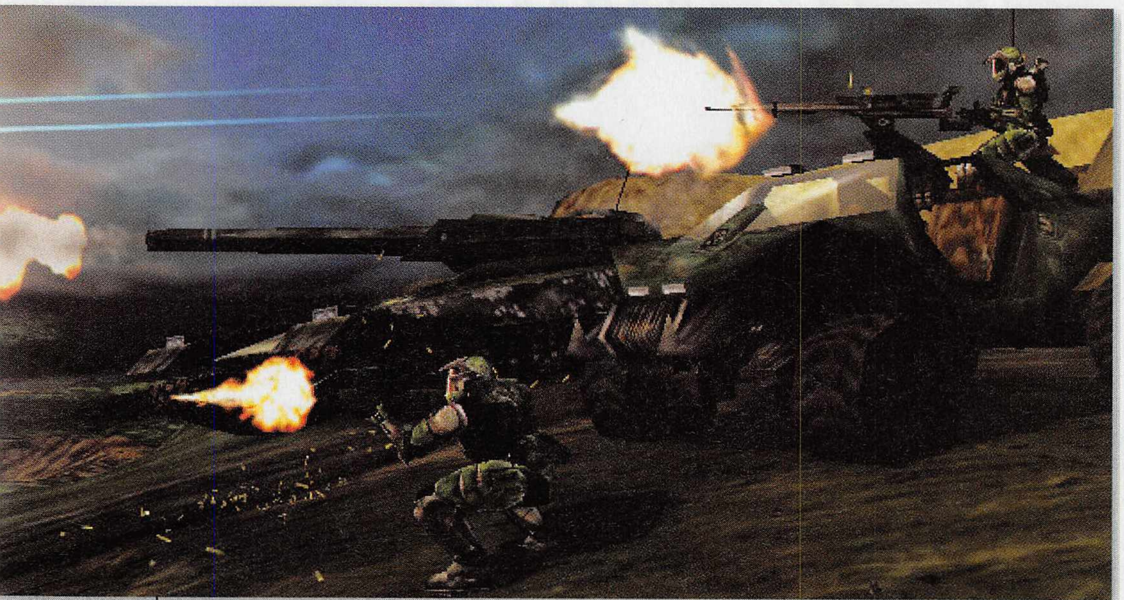


And that was the last we ever saw of the Gungans and Jar-Jar. Thank you, Bungie!

armored suit — not to mention visual tricks that can make the nose of an aircraft really look round when it's actually square.

Bungie aims to give you science fiction with a story, single-player, and multiplayer that aims to revolutionize gaming — haven't seen anything like that since a little game called *Half-Life*. Only time will tell.

Where is it?

Founded by Alexander Seropian in 1991 but headed by the famously reclusive visionary Jason Jones, Bungie has two locations — Bungie West in San Jose, CA, and Bungie HQ in Chicago. Bungie has been in the game making business for 10 years, though its most successful titles have been the *Myth* series and *Marathon* trilogy.

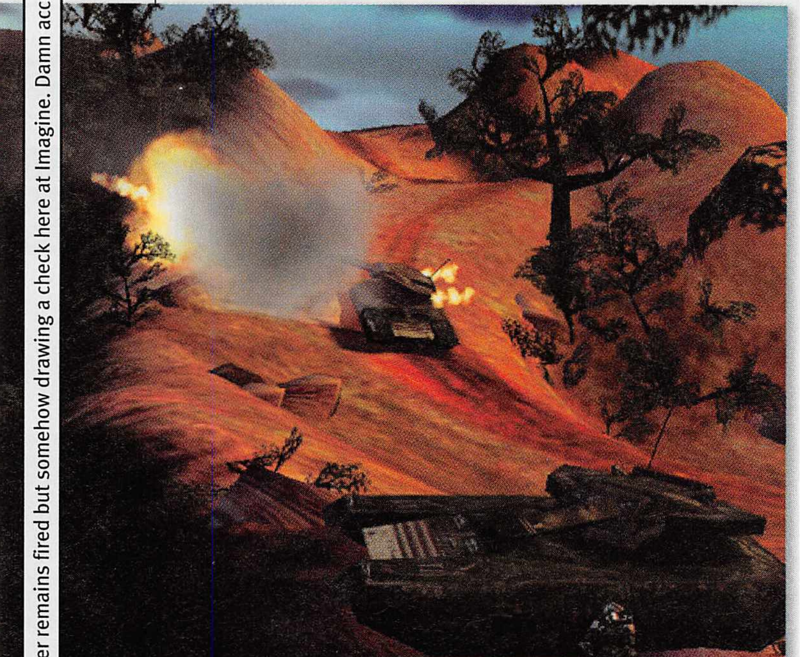
Marathon is widely recognized as the *Quake* of the Mac world, while *Myth: The Fallen Lords* was named Game of the Year by several magazines. Currently the public knows of two Bungie projects in the works: *Oni* being developed at Bungie West and *Halo* at Bungie headquarters.

What's the security?

There are a few things stopping Bungie from stealing the hearts and minds of the gaming public. Truth be told, Bungie hasn't made an action game in years. In that time, the bar has been significantly raised and they've opened themselves up to competition from the PC developers who are legion in the action genre. While the engine looks great, nobody really knows what gameplay will be like. Bungie encourages this actually, and has kept many of the details on the game secret. Perhaps those secrets belie a weakness?

What's the payoff?

Open your beady little eyes and look at the screenshots on these pages ... if that doesn't get you excited, then you don't know shit about games. Obviously we think this operation will likely be a huge success. Our only concern is whether the game will be finished while the graphics are still above average — if the cycle takes long enough then even these visuals won't be impressive anymore (see *Messiah* for example).



Look closely at this picture and find Waldo.

INSIDE INFORMATION

OUR MAN ON THE INSIDE (JOE STRATON) LET US IN ON THE MULTIPLAYER ASPECTS OF THE GAME.

Q: Where does Deathmatch go from here? Is it fully evolved?

A: The evolution comes when developers create new situations and tactical elements that put deathmatch in a new context. The obvious way to do that is to add strategic goals like Capture the Flag, and while we are definitely adding goals like that to *Halo*, we are also adding depth and complexity to the tactical aspects of the game.

Q: Do you see massively multiplayer and teamplay merging in your ideas of the future? How so? Is it fun?

A: The problem with combining the two concepts is that while massively multiplayer games are fun with large numbers of people, the number of people you can actually coordinate with on a tactical level is small. Our goal with *Halo* is to include all of the community and sweeping feel of a large online game while keeping the actual gameplay tactical.

Q: Powerplay? The future or an idea?

A: The future, beyond a doubt, is high-bandwidth, low-latency online gaming that is as mainstream as cable TV and Internet shopping. Powerplay appears to be a smart approach to achieving this ideal and Bungie will be participating in future Powerplay discussions, but it's too early to say if any of our games will make use of it.

Q: Communication is the key to a great teamplay game, what does your game do to make this easier?

A: Communication itself isn't the key to great teamplay. In fact, communication is the main obstacle. Instead of making communication easier, we are striving to make cooperation in *Halo* as simple and natural as possible.

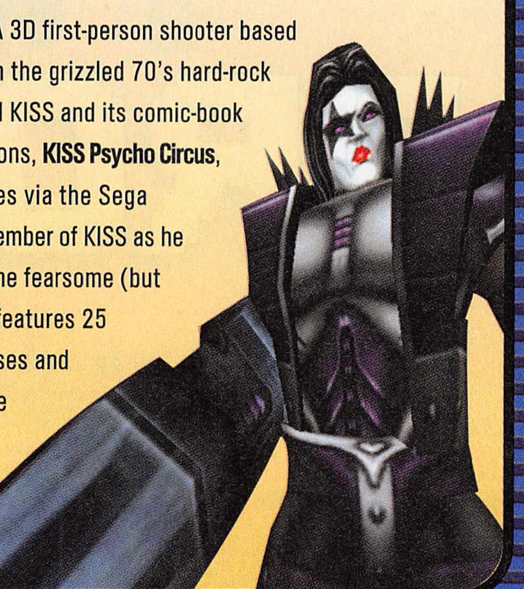
Q: What is beyond Capture the Flag?

A: Capture the Flag added an entirely new dimension of tactical gameplay; you had a goal besides carnage to consider. The real innovation beyond Capture the Flag is adding depth and subtlety on the tactical level and that is where *Halo* excels. Every movement, every shot, every decision has tactical implications and errors in judgment kill just as fast bullet.

Dan Egger remains fired but somehow drawing a check here at Imagine. Damn accounting glitch

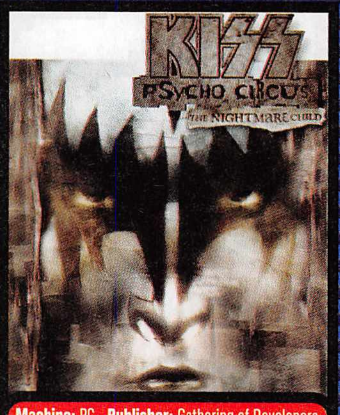
KISS PSYCHO CIRCUS THE NIGHTMARE CHILD

Rock Your World. Wreck The Universe



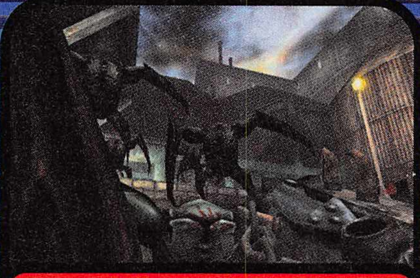
"A 3D first-person shooter based on the grizzled 70's hard-rock band KISS and its comic-book adaptation from Todd McFarland Productions, **KISS Psycho Circus**, will feature online multiplayer capabilities via the Sega Network. Players will control a no-name member of KISS as he battles the freaks of nature spawned by the fearsome (but unborn) Nightmare Child. **Nightmare Child** features 25 different enemies (including freakish bosses and mini-bosses). In addition, players will have access to 12 weapons and 16 powerful artifacts."

— **DailyRadar.com**



Machine: PC **Publisher:** Gathering of Developers
Genre: Shooter **# of Players:** 1 to multiplayer
Release date: 5/1/00

The Starbearer, ready to reclaim his status as a KISS Elder!



Good luck beating back the hordes of Headless as you explore The Water Realm.

Follow The Demon through the lava scorched sewars of The Fire Realm.

Add the Sidewinder Precision Pro for Absolute Domination.

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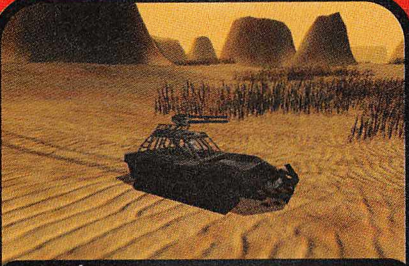
GROUND CONTROL

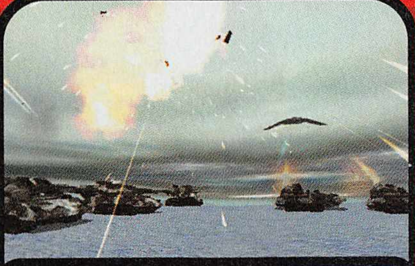
You're In Command, Butchy. So Now What?

"**Ground Control** is a gorgeous, fully 3D RTS that ignores resource management and hopes to wow gamers with stunning graphics and loads of action. A new planet has been discovered and the two factions race to settle it first, setting the stage for the action. Everyone will notice the spectacular graphics. There have been a lot of games that have tried to master the free-moving camera in a 3D world, but there has always been some little detail that they couldn't get right. **Ground Control** solves this problem with six degrees of movement. You can change the camera direction using the mouse wheel. The single-player versions features two scenarios, each with 15 missions." — **DailyRadar.com**

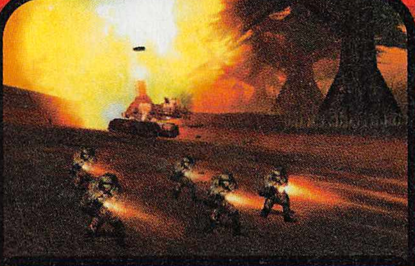
Machine: PC **Publisher:** Sierra/Havas
Genre: Strategy **# of Players:** 1
Release date: Q2/2000



Incredibly detailed units and landscapes.



Amazingly simple camera controls.



Revolutionary multiplayer modes.

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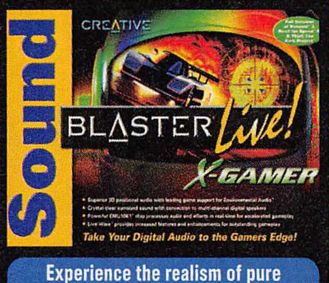

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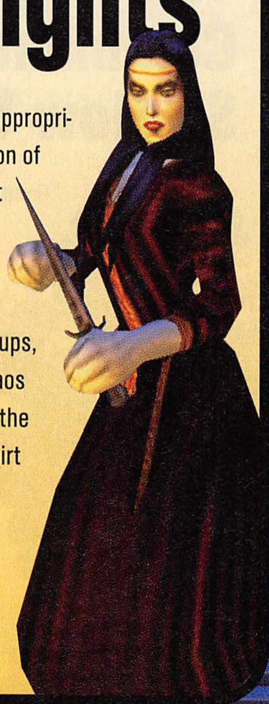
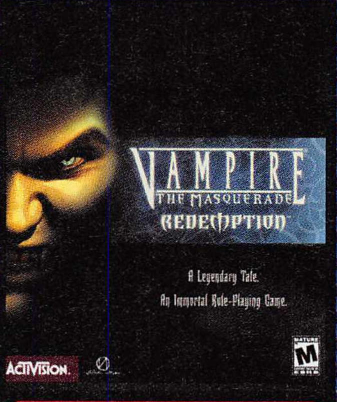
Open Nights



"We thought it would be most appropriate to take a look at the condition of the human heart from a different direction: from the inside out. As in pulling the still beating heart from a person's chest and snacking on it like a throbbing candy apple. **Redemption** is based on the World of Darkness created by White Wolf Games, a dice-less pen-and-paper game; essentially an RPG for grown-ups, Goths and gutterpunks. Take a dash of sex, add in a touch of urban chaos and street grit, then pour in an extra-large plasma bag of action. Wrap the whole concoction up in a black and crimson cloak and ruffled white shirt and stand back. There's more disturbing atmosphere in a single page of a Vampire Storyteller guide than in ten D&D modules. The single-player experience could be one of the most absorbing, perhaps even moving narratives we've seen in years. Time will tell!" — **DailyRadar.com**

Daily RADAR .com



Machine: PC **Publisher:** Activision
Genre: RPG **# of Players:** 1
Release date: 5/31/00

Armed to the teeth, these medieval warriors stand strong against any intruders.

A light snack. Looking for a little energy burst, this vampire dines on some local cuisine.

3 heroes engage in mortal kombat with a deadly creature of the night in the city of Prague.

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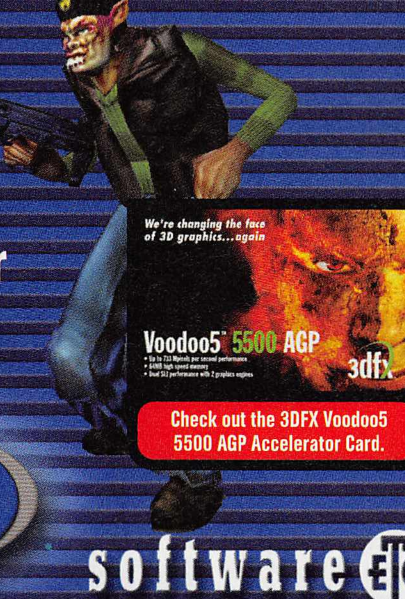

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MotorCity

MISSION: "HOT CARS AND HOT CHICKS"

What's the mark?

Harking back to the graceful days of speed and style, *Need For Speed: Motor City* brings back memories of muscle cars and muscle heads in both a single and a massive mutliplayer experience. Hold on a minute. If this doesn't sound like the *Need For Speed* you remember, it's not. In a sense, this actually *is* your daddy's *Need For Speed*. But that's not a bad thing. See, Pops got to drive some pretty cool machines. And an injection of style might be just what the gamer ordered for the racing genre.

You should expect no less than the kitchen sink with this game. EA plans to ship with 35 car models, spread from a '32 Ford all the way up to the '73 Firebird. Add to this 12 meaty tracks — more than your typical stomping grounds. And oh yeah, a massive multiplayer experience for those of you brave enough to get online and race for slips.

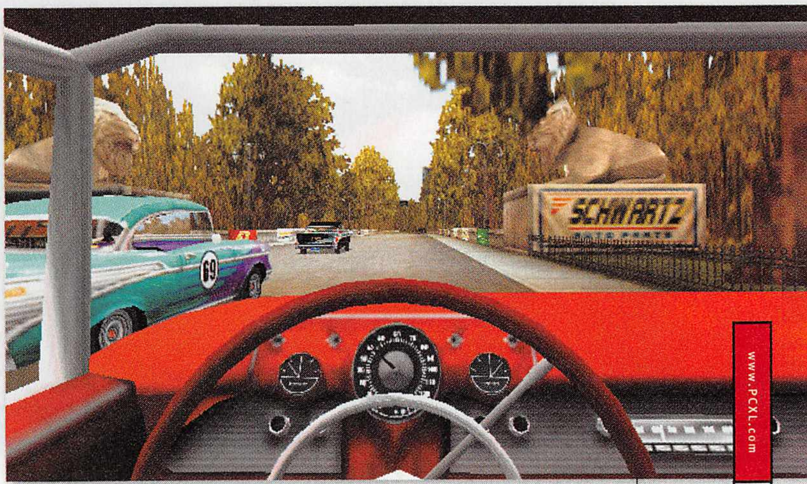
Single-player will feature three modes of play. In Sanctioned mode, you'll use your pocket change to buy the local lemon and build enough reputation to enter restricted races. Eventually, you'll take on the neighborhood king with your car's title on the line. For the rowdier types, there's the Outlaw racing mode where you're up against the angriest smokey's this side of Salem, Oregon.

To get to the big leagues, you'll want to plunk down some hard-earned cash in the garage and tweak your Bessy to the Next Biggest Engine. Or if more subtle adjustments are your bag, consider *Motor City* a grease monkey Valhalla. Producer Jim Eomunos insists there will be over 1,000 parts, with everything you could imagine from blowers to fuzzy dice. I'm personally hoping they include a nice GM gas cap in tribute to the one I lost we route to infiltrate the EA offices.

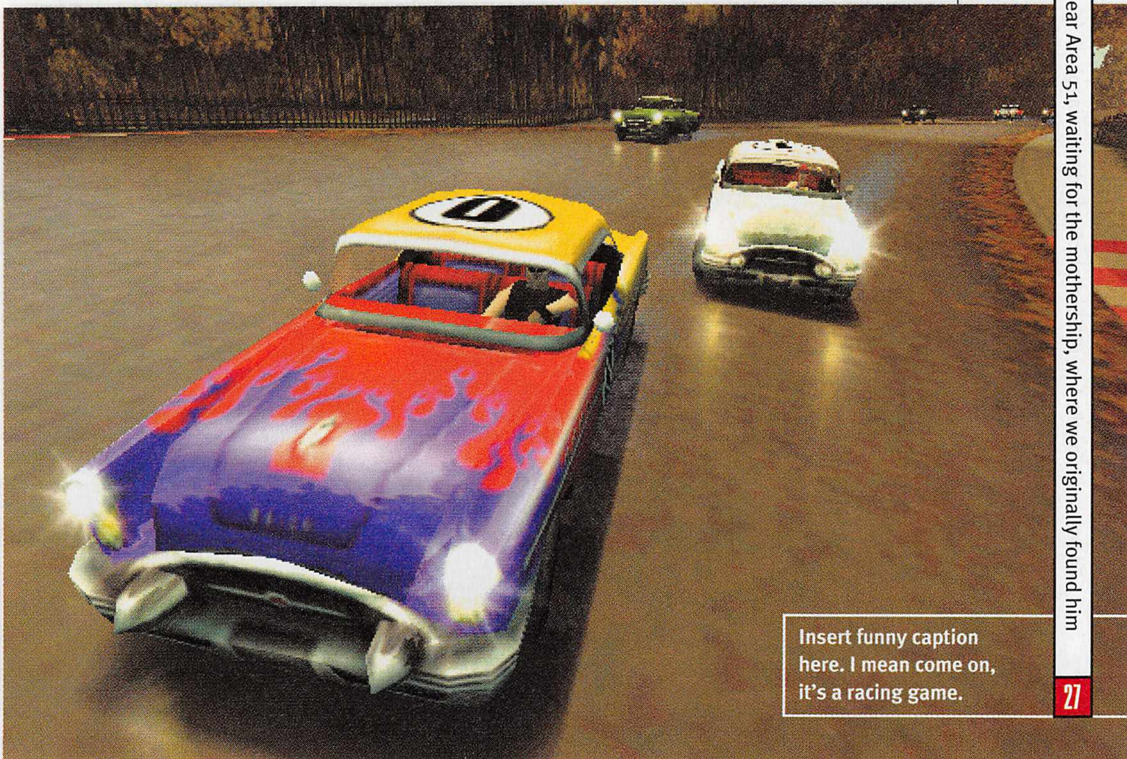
With a completely redesigned true-point physics engine, you can expect all of these modifications to make a noticeable difference, right down to staggered tires.

And the sound crew is hard at work ensuring that the audio remains true to your individual tuning, down to an authentic engine roar alongside the exact number of exhaust pipes you've equipped.

If all these geeky details still aren't sparking your plug, EA is throwing in a new server-based (cheat-free) multiplayer *Motor City*, where the babes actually aren't virtual and the chat rooms are drive-ins. Your beloved beast won't pick up any chicks until you head over to the Paint Shop and grab some user-customized skins or read the Gazette to buy a car someone's put up for sale. With any sort of turnout, *Motor City Online* will be a real happenin' place where computer geeks and car geeks can join together, do their thing, and fool themselves into thinking they are somehow cool. Not that *we'd* ever do anything like that.



What a brilliant concept! Schwartz's discount lion statues and auto parts! Where can I buy stock?



Insert funny caption here. I mean come on, it's a racing game.

Matt Holmes is sleeping near Area 51, waiting for the mothership, where we originally found him

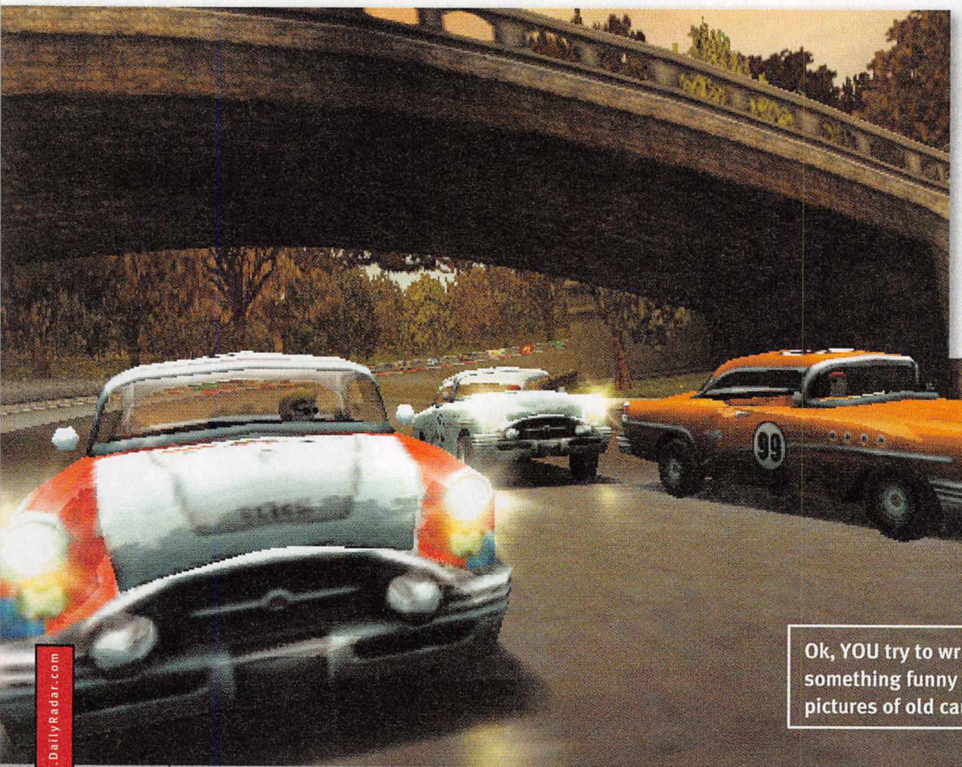
MotorCity

DEVELOPER ···➤ Electronic Arts

PUBLISHER ···➤ EA

RELEASE DATE ···➤ This year

API SUPPORT ···➤ The usual stuff



Ok, YOU try to write something funny about pictures of old cars.

Where is it?

For as long as anyone can remember, this gaming, developing, and publishing powerhouse has been a titan in the industry. Together with the *Need For Speed* series, EA's Seattle branch (actually in Bellevue, WA) has also been the fountainhead of the EA Sports lineup. EA also has offices in Vancouver and all over the world, and they are the company that drove that damn phrase, "If it's in the game ... it's IN the game" into your head forever.

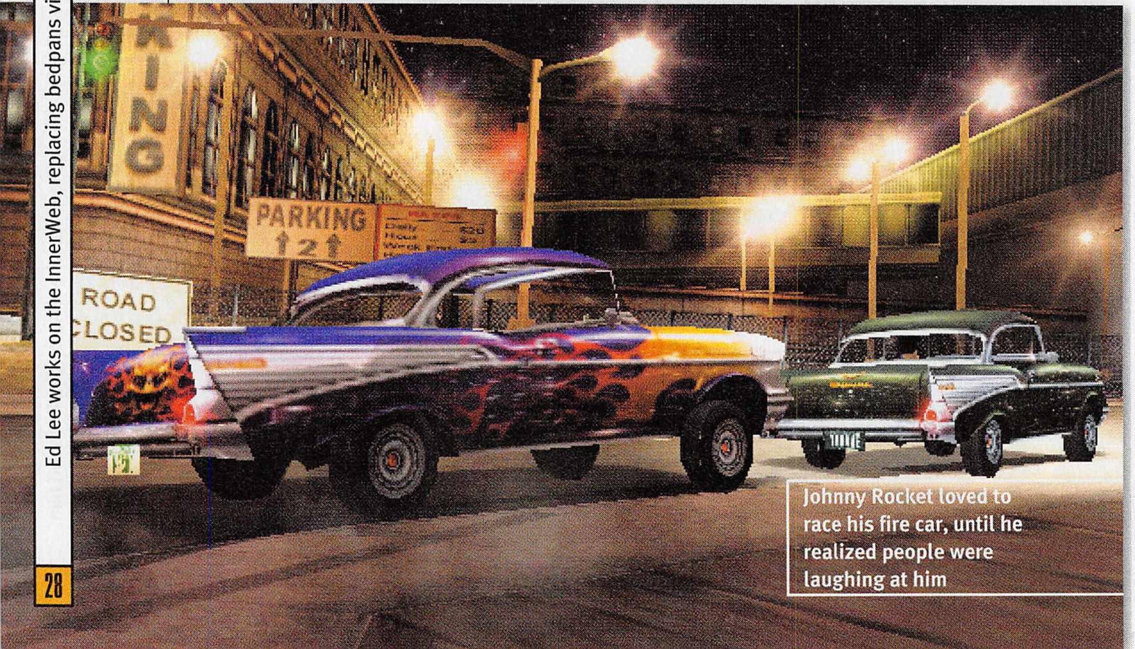
What's the security?

Need For Speed's collision detection has always been a weak spot. Although it looks much improved, a more thorough test is needed before I can whole-heartedly recommend the new physics engine running this game.

The tenuous balance between garage tinkering and racing skill remains a tricky debate, as yet shrouded in secrecy. We're hoping there's no Elvis anywhere, or we'll chuck the CD around as a death-dealing frisbee.

What's the payoff?

If you're a simulation fan, the attention to physics and modification will be right up your alley. EA will have a more difficult job trying to convince mouse and keyboard addicts that there's a reason to dust-off their joysticks or get a wheel. Those who'd expect turning corners to be as easy as circle-strafing will be the hardest to convert. Ultimately, the multiplayer set-up may be a breath of fresh air for purists looking for something beyond *Nascar Online*.



Johnny Rocket loved to race his fire car, until he realized people were laughing at him

INSIDE INFORMATION

WE USED THE SPECIAL EUROPEAN VERSION OF THE PCXL P.I. TO BREAK DOWN THE DOORS ON REMEDY ENTERTAINMENT AND BEAT SOME ANSWERS OUT OF THE FINNS. HERE IS WHAT SAM LAKE HAD TO SAY.

Q: What's the wackiest, most random *NFS* occurrence you've ever witnessed?
A: *NFS*? Tag racing, with two players playing a destruction derby, last man standing wins. Best moment so far in *Motor City* — two words: Cadillac jumping.

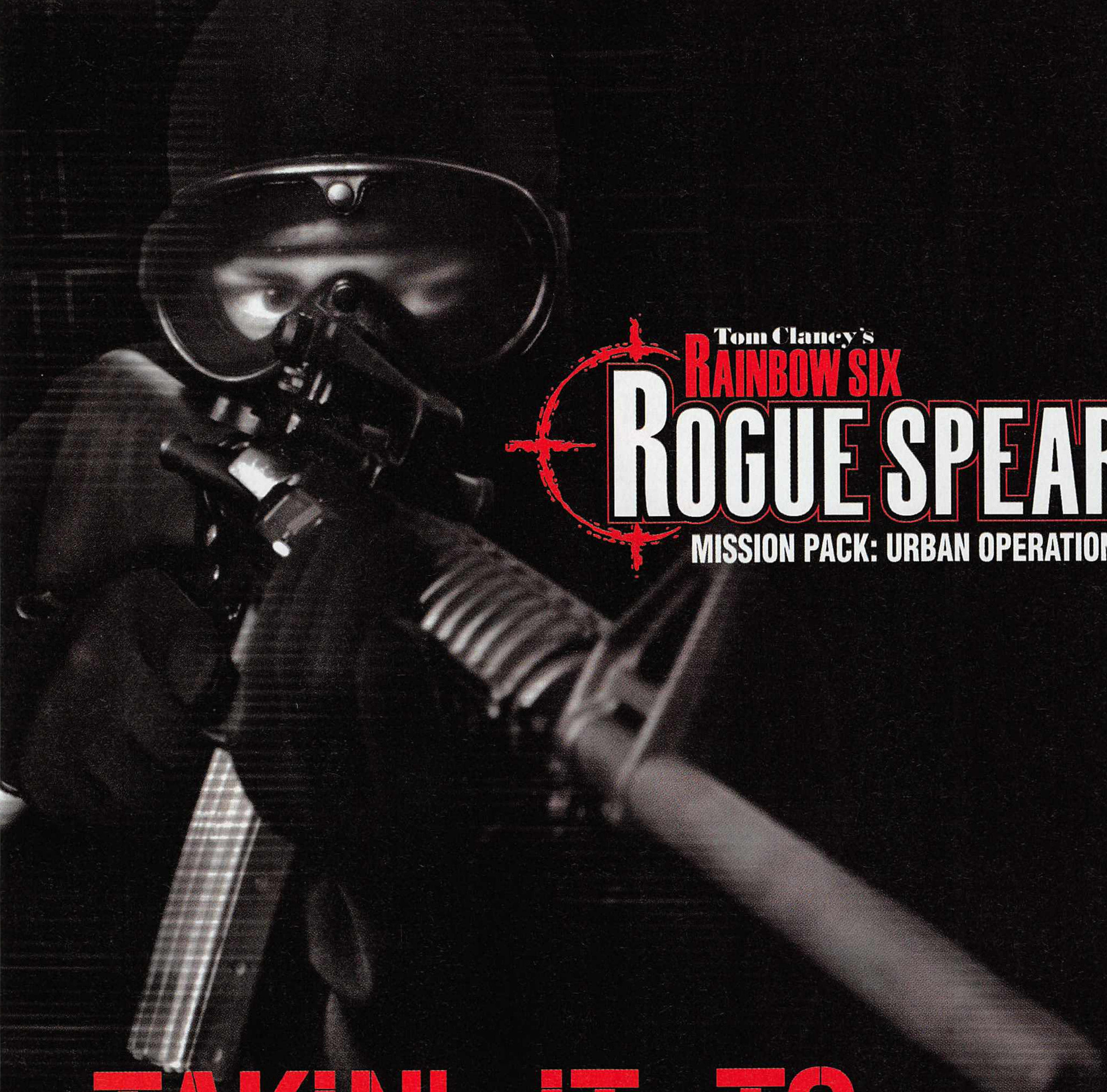
Q: Assuming any vehicle in history could be yours, what would it be?
A: Roman chariot. Eight horses. Big sword.

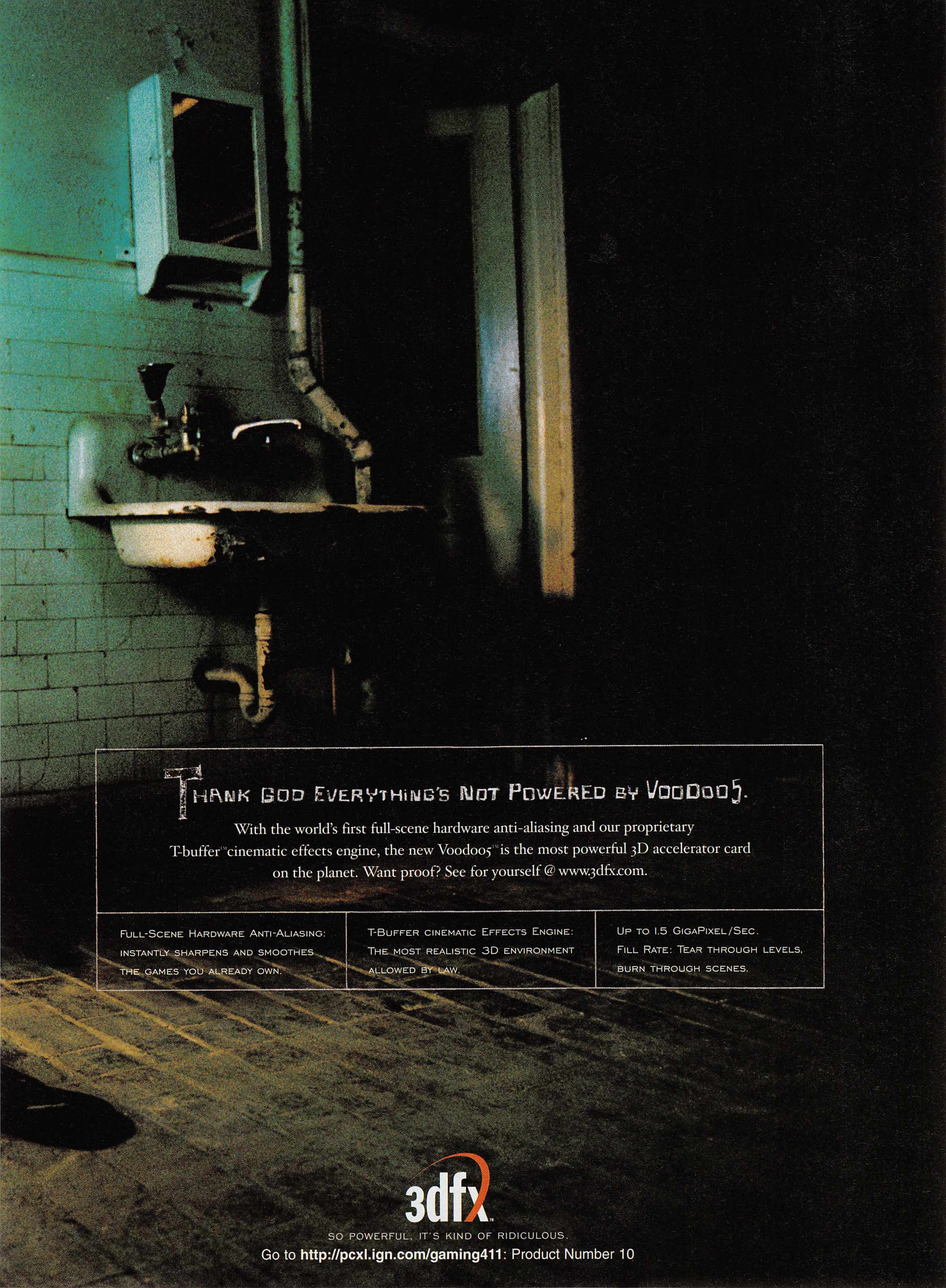
Q: What's the single most important aspect of a great racing game?
A: White knuckle driving experience. If you're not on the edge, you're not racing. Pants optional.

Q: For the mouse/keyboard action gamer, what would be the most cost efficient controller investment you would recommend to enjoy *Motor City*?
A: For *Motor City*, get a wheel. I'm a purist kind of guy — if I'm playing a flight sim, I want a full stick & throttle setup. For a driving game, I need a steering wheel. Some people say that a joystick is better for the race, but how many cars do you drive with a joystick? Oh, and if you want to enhance your force feedback experience while staying on a cost-effective budget, I think you can pick up a bottle of ripple for under three bucks.

Q: If you weren't making games, what would you want to be doing?
A: Embalmer to the Stars(tm), selling cryogenic units to the suddenly rich. Either that or "in the waste management business."

Ed Lee works on the InnerWeb, replacing bedpans via robots (or something like that)





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Command & Conquer: Renegade

MISSION: "NOD NEEDS A KANE-ING"

What's the mark?

Command & Conquer: Renegade is a third-person 3D action game with all the characters and buildings you remember from the original, only this time you can enter and blow up all of them in full 3D! *Renegade* takes place during the original *Command &Conquer* game. You'll play the Commando, whose name we now discover is Nick Parker. (Codename: "Havoc") The storyline runs parallel to the original game's story and the two stories will cross over during certain missions.

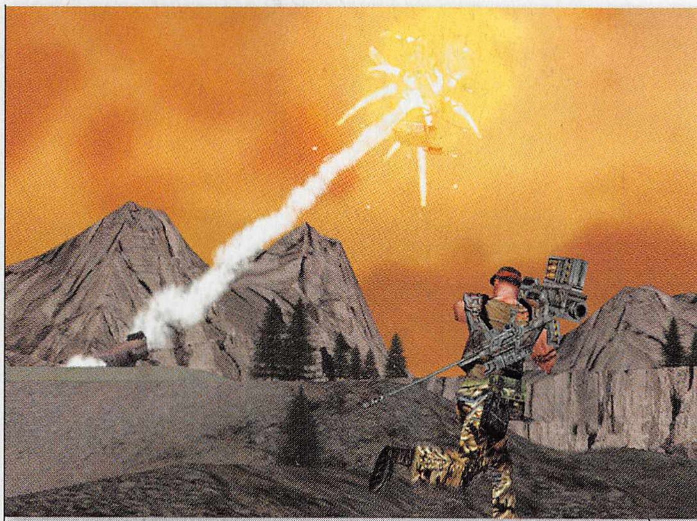
While the nostalgia factor is cool, the primary reason, for going back to the original game, according to the game's producers, was simply to reproduce the stunning GDI and NOD structures that gamers love. Many of the missions will have you attempting to infiltrate these NOD structures, finally allowing you to see them from the inside. The bases also work exactly the way they should, too. In fact, at one point, producer Michael Ward was having a problem finding NOD's base until he came upon a Tiberium field and followed a Harvester back to its Processor. Settings aren't just restricted to what we saw in *C&C*, however. Players will be fighting on Arctic ice fields, oil tankers, and huge industrial complexes, just to name a few.

The game's level designers are going out of their way to avoid "puzzle" missions that present only one solution. That will require some pretty fancy artificial intelligence, though. Ward believes that they're up to the task, however, and showed us one sequence where he snipes one of two NOD troopers on guard duty. As we watched, the remaining trooper noticed his companion fall and became visibly upset, running to sound the alarm and launch an aggressive search for whoever put a bullet in his buddies noggin.

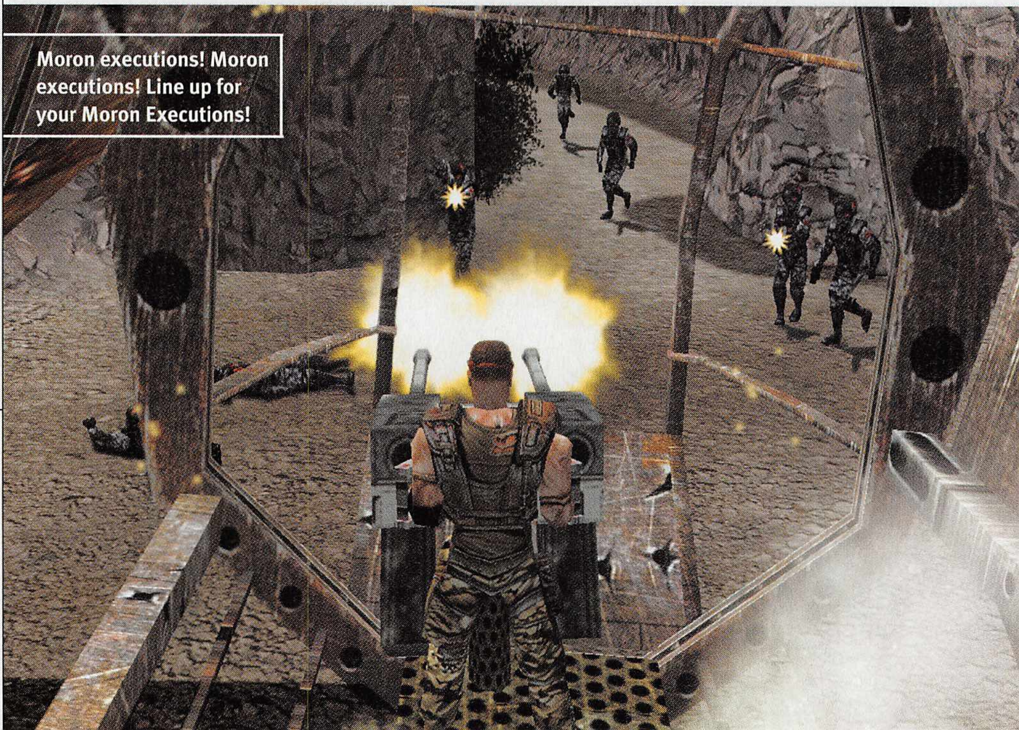
Another element that will get a lot of gamers pumped is the game's support for vehicular combat. The original strategy game supported dozens of ultra-cool, futuristic vehicles, both ground and air. Players will be able to tool around in virtually ever car, truck, and helicopter they remember from the original game.

While we'll personally be thrilled to get behind the wheel of a NOD Flame Tank, we don't envy the person who ends up driving the Harvester. Someone will have to, however, because vehicular combat is part and parcel of the game's multiplayer experience. Players will not only be able to drive the vehicles, but will also be able to take the passenger/gunner seat (much like Bungie's upcoming *Halo*). The multiplayer game is taking more of a *Team Fortress*-like approach. For example, one team may be trying to hold a NOD base while another is trying to sneak in to put the base's power plant out of commission. The game's multiplayer architecture supposedly accommodates up to 256 players, and that, combined with the game's huge landscapes, should make for some interesting clan matches.

There's more, of course. *C&C*



We've got a call from the FAA, how close are you to the airport?



Moron executions! Moron executions! Line up for your Moron Executions!

C&C: Renegade

DEVELOPER ···> Westwood Studios

PUBLISHER ···> Electronic Arts

RELEASE DATE ···> Fall 2000

API SUPPORT ···> D3D, Voodoo, OpenGL

Gia Decarlo is fielding offers. Model, supermodel, super-duper model, who can decide?

All we got to say about that is "Damn, it's a pretty good-looking picture."

purists will be glad to know that the voice for the Commando is back from the original game, and I haven't even gone into the insane detail and size of most of the environments you can experience. The Temple of NOD, for example, has six full underground levels to explore during the game. The fact that we spent most of the demonstration time with *Renegade* geekily cooing "Oooh" and "Awesome!" like a drooling fanboy at E3, says something about both the game and the passion of the game's designers.

Where is it?

Westwood Studios is located about 50 minutes outside of Las Vegas, Nevada. Founded by Brett Sperry and Louis Castle over 15 years ago, the company boasts the creation of the *Command & Conquer* series, along with other successful titles including *Lands of Lore, Blade Runner, Dune 2, Monopoly*, and *Kyrandia*. They also put out the criminally average *Recoil* — which has become something of a **PCXL** classic — in a grossly average sort of way.

What's the security?

Can a company best known for strategy and adventure games really pull off a third-person perspective shooter? Particularly a company that's recently been lambasted by critics as having lost the critical edge that brought us groundbreaking classics like *Red Alert*? But, the concept, engine, and enthusiasm behind this product makes us pretty damn confident that this game will be stealing plenty of your time in the not-too distant future.

What's the payoff?

Westwood is always at their best when trying something new. *Command & Conquer: Renegade* has got the whole company pumped — and with good reason. The new perspective, the multiplayer options, and the graphics engine look quite cool. But the real cause for hope is the company's attempt to revitalize the third-person action genre, while simultaneously trying to re-establish their creative edge.

"Maybe if I lie here grabbing my balls he'll think I'm dead ..."

INSIDER INFORMATION

WE MANAGED TO ELUDE OUR PR "HANDLERS" FOR A FEW MINUTES AND PLY THE GAME'S PRODUCER, MICHAEL WARD, WITH SHINY BEADS AND STRONG DRINK.

Q: What first inspired you to move into a third-person perspective game?

A: Our main character, Havoc, is a take on the original *C&C* Commando. As long as we're going to the trouble of fleshing him out, giving him a name, deciding how he looks, etc., it would be a waste if we didn't get to see him actually maneuvering in the *C&C* environment!

Q: Will having played earlier *C&C* Games help while playing *Renegade*?

A: Yes and no. Certainly the world should look more familiar to players who know *C&C*, and they will recognize many of the buildings and vehicles in that world and know what their basic functions are. *Renegade* is not an RTS, however, so our focus is much more on action. Every mission has been designed so it can be played with no prior knowledge of *C&C*. Having said that, players who DO know *C&C* may be able to exploit that knowledge and find alternate solutions to objectives.

Q: The *C&C* Commando vs. Duke Nuke'em — who'd win?

A: Havoc would win on the Independent ticket. He might want Duke as vice-president, though. (You just KNOW Duke has seen his share of vice.)

Q: Briefly describe the game's storyline and how it's integrated into the ongoing *C&C* saga.

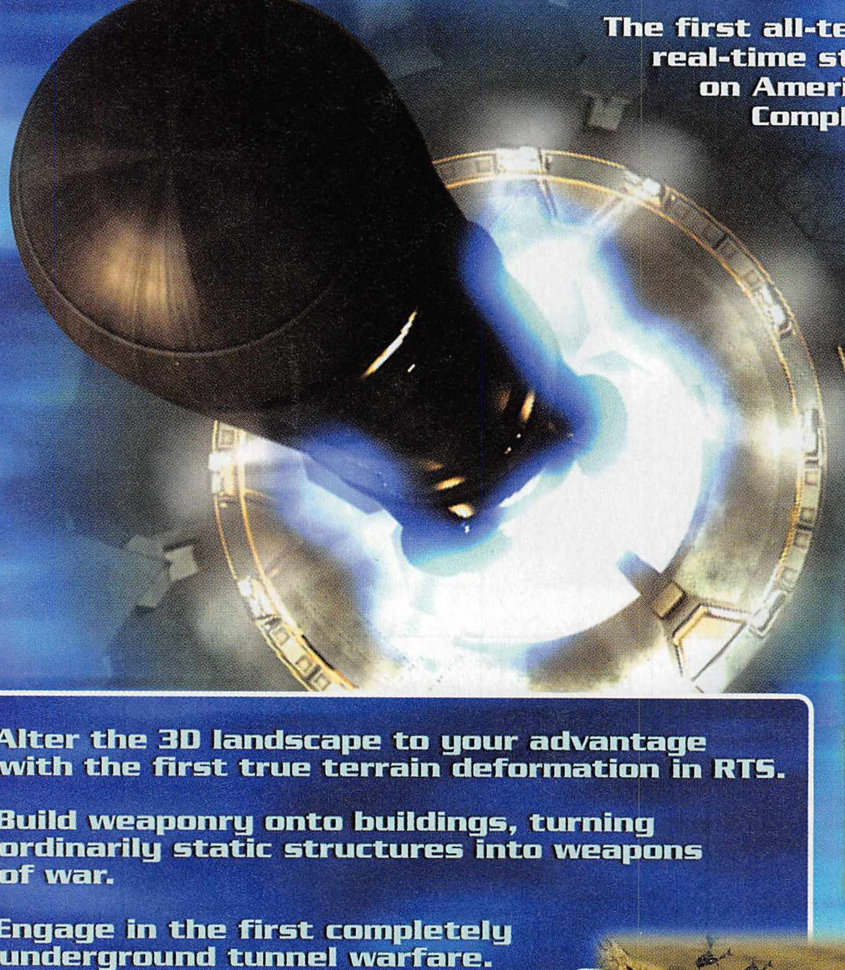
A: Renegade begins mid-*C&C*, approximately around the time of the commando mission of the GDI campaign. Nod's Black Hand outfit has kidnapped the world's leading Tiberium experts. GDI turns to their elite commando, a man with a reputation for getting results in his own way: Captain Nick Parker, codename Havoc. With the entire Nod army between him and his objective, Havoc uncovers a web of deception, insidious experiments, and the depths to which Kane will sink in his quest for global domination.

Q: If *C&C* was real, which side would you enlist with? GDI or NOD? Why?

A: Nod. Why? Flame tanks + stealth tanks + obelisks = good fun. Plus they offer full medical and dental.

Hector Salazar was a coat rack. He is still a coat rack. We'll miss him the most

Enter a whole new dimension of RTS.



The first all-terrain, three-dimensional real-time strategy game has landed on American shores from Europe. Complete with a revolutionary 3D engine and a ton of accolades:

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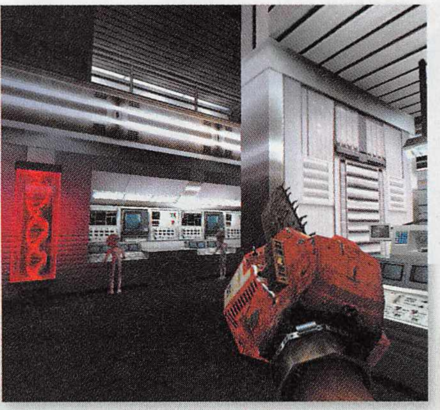
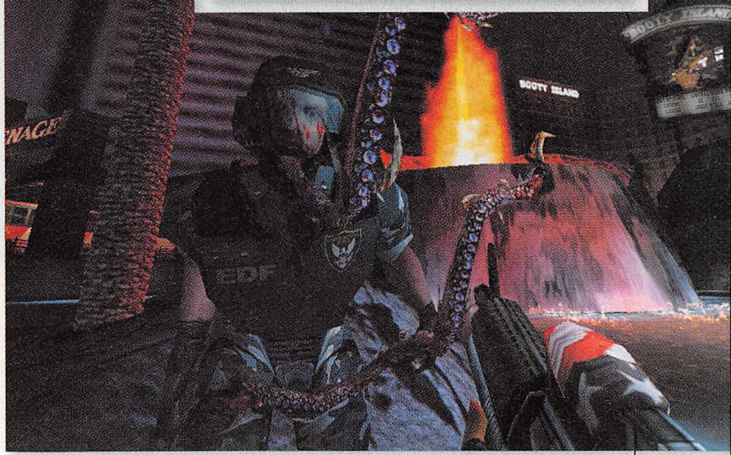
Duke Nukem Forever

MISSION: "WHEN IT'S DONE"





You're not looking so good there, Bill. What, is that a big fat tenticle in your mouth man? That taste good?

What's the mark?

If all of the components of **PCXL** were thrown into a programming blender and turned into a game, it would come out as *Duke Nukem Forever*. It's politically incorrect, deliciously violent, morally bankrupt, comically genius, and unbelievably entertaining — all mixed into one delicious smoothie of gaming goodness.

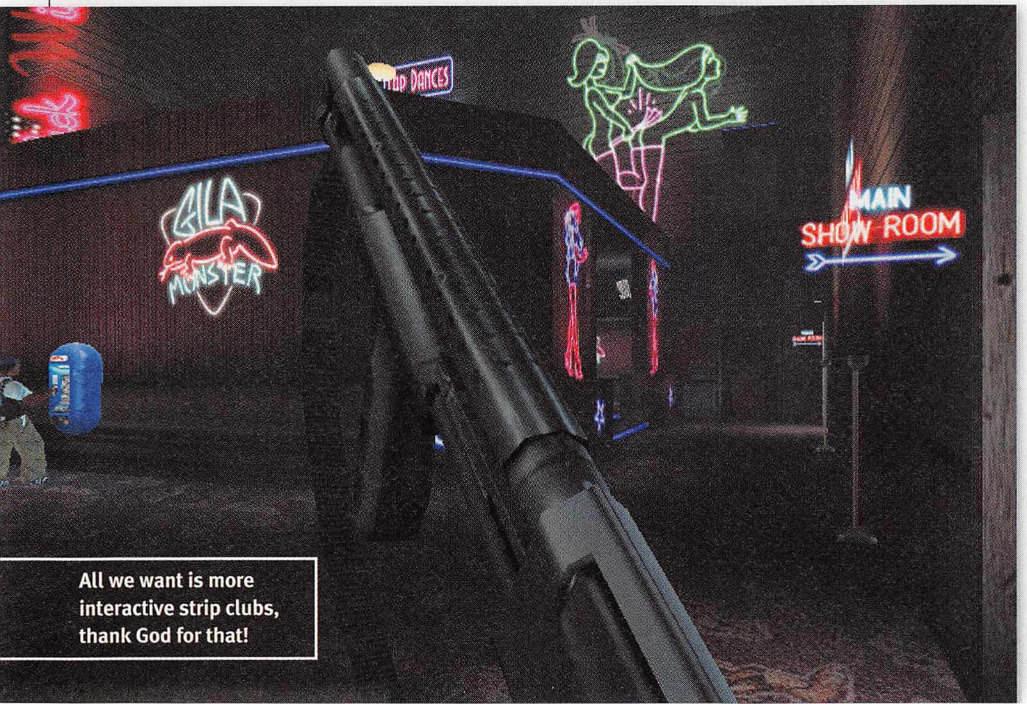
DNF recently announced it would be going with the *Unreal Tournament* engine, its third engine switch since development began. However, *DNF* is not going to be a *UT* mod. 3D Realms has ripped open the *UT* code and created a much more dynamic game engine. According to Project Lead George Broussard, "We've added many things to the *Unreal* engine: Level of Detail for meshes, particle system capable of 1000-2000 particles on screen at a time, skeletal animation system with motion-captured data, incredible flexibility in making maps interactive."

Key modifications include the ability to destroy and interact with just about anything onscreen and the addition of location specific damage (á la *Soldier Of Fortune*). Essentially this gives the developers the freedom to create the dynamic worlds *Duke* fans have come to expect.

The sequel to *Duke Nukem 3D* has been on our "hot" list ever since the magazine launched and our team of hot, catsuit-wearing thieves recently got their hands on some new information. *DNF* will take place in and around Las Vegas. There are six major "zones" in the game and each is 100% unique. Little has been said about the story, other than that there will be one. Our educated guess is that alien scum have once again decided to take over Earth and Duke is mankind's only hope.

The game is said to feature many different characters in the game besides Duke, the most interesting of the lot is Bombshell, a suitably bimbo-ish blonde with overactive mammary glands. As anyone who played *Duke Nukem 3D* would know, the promise of *DNF* is much more than girls, guns, and gore. Broussard states, "I think *DNF* will be the most interactive FPS game to date. I don't see how it can be otherwise. We have so much stuff you can 'do' in the game that it dwarfs what we did in *Duke Nukem 3D*." Indeed, that is what we were expecting, or at least hoping for. Duke will also return with his impressive variety of weapons including pipe bombs, laser-trip mines, and the amazing shrink ray. 3D Realms also promises several new weapons and improvements on the old favorites. For example, you will now be able to fight back if you are "midget-ized" by the shrink-ray. Another key point is that Duke will operate several vehicles. No clue as to exactly what vehicles these will be, but expect Duke to be firing out of the back of a truck and hopping on a Harley at some point in the game.

The idea is to break up the game and make it more than a ho-hum hallway shooter. A big part of

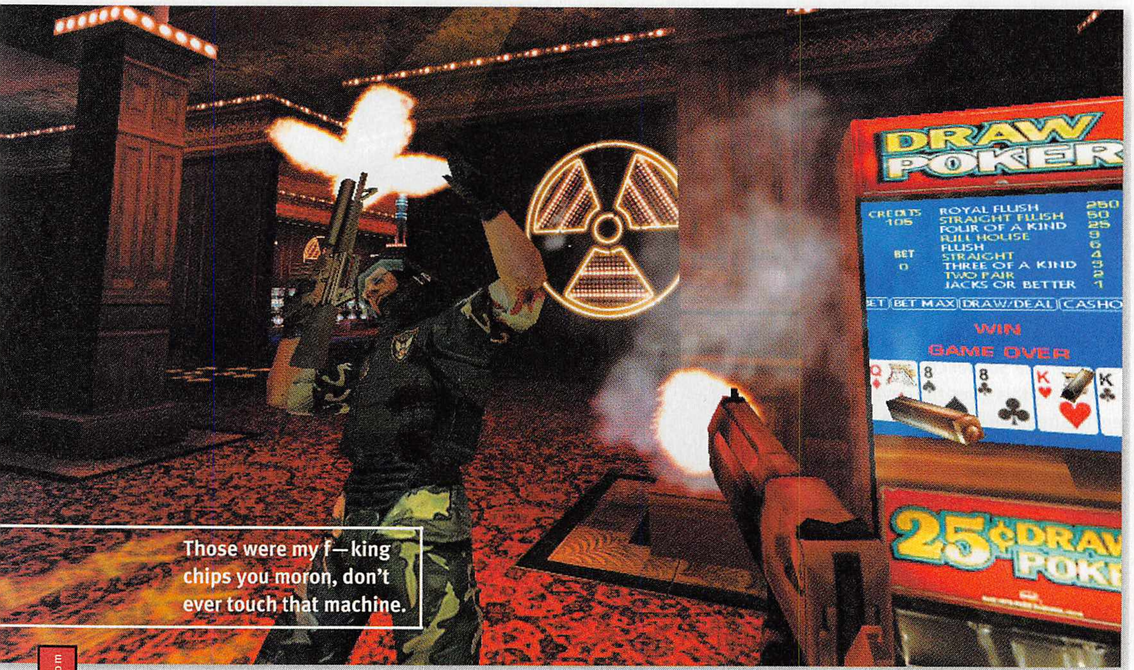


All we want is more interactive strip clubs, thank God for that!

DN Forever

DEVELOPER ···> 3D Realms
PUBLISHER ···> GT Interactive
RELEASE DATE ···> When it's done
API SUPPORT ···> The usual suspects

Garrett Kenyon still has an amputation fetish and has a new website, www.amputeehotties.com



Those were my f—king chips you moron, don't ever touch that machine.

Duke Nukem 3D was deathmatch and 3D Realms plans to make the sequel more than just *Q3* deathmatch. DNF will have traditional DM, but according to Broussard, "… it will be unique because of the weapons, alt fires, and interesting locations to fight in. If I have to fight in one more crate warehouse, factory, or generic space station/ gothic temple I'm going to go crazy!" Broussard also hinted that there would be several class-based teamplay games similar to *Team Fortress*.

Still, not much is known about *DNF*. Despite our legally-questionable efforts to find out the whole story, we are still left with many questions unanswered. What we do know is that *DNF* is going to be a HUGE game, filled with interactive environments, one-liners, babes, aliens, and all the colored-lighting the *UT* engine can pump out — and that sounds pretty damn good to us.

Where is it?

Apogee (the parent company to 3D Realms) is conveniently located in Dallas, Texas — just a stone's throw away from other possible heist locations like Id Software, Ion Storm, and Ritual Entertainment. The storied history of Apogee/3D Realms all began with the introduction of shareware with games like *Wolfenstein 3D*. *Duke Nukem 3D* really put them on the map, and its build engine was used for eight other games in all. Scott Miller and George Brous-Broussard are co-owners of the company and hardcore gamers — a rare combination. Their reputation for secrecy and vagueness made this an especially difficult story to pilfer.

What's the security?

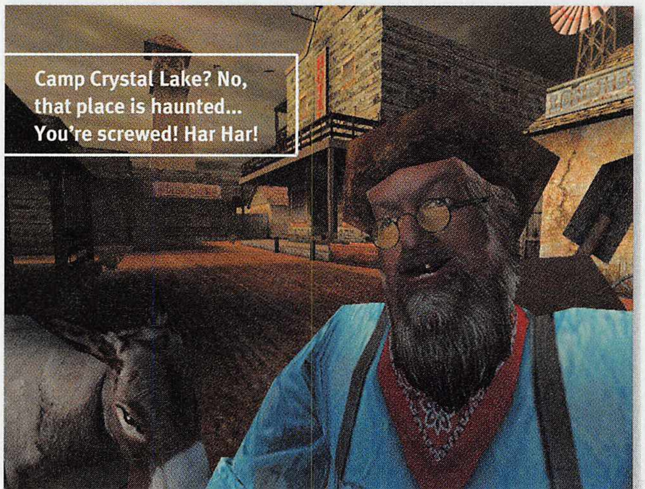
The handy thing about *Duke Nukem Forever* is that the title also describes how long the game has been in development for f—king-ever! With three engine switches and no release date in sight, we fear that by the time this game is finished we'll be old and gray and reviewing the game in *PC Geriatric*.

The reputation of 3D Realms and the rich character of Duke gives us hope, but can they deliver a unique experience again? Or is this just going to be *Duke Nukem 3D* with colored-lighting? Creating something as amazingly original as the first *Duke* is a rare occurrence, and a hefty challenge for even the most adept developer.

What's the payoff?

There is no denying that *DNF* is going to be an amazing game. But the longer the game stays in development, the older the current technology becomes and the higher the likelihood of another engine switch (which will extend the development time leading to another engine switch, and so on).

We need *DNF* by Christmas 2000 because the PC game industry desperately needs the personality that only Duke can deliver as soon as possible. We'll be sending our spies to the 3D Realms offices until we find out more, but this much we do know: When *DNF* is done, you'll play it and you'll love it — that is, if it ever actually gets done.



Camp Crystal Lake? No, that place is haunted... You're screwed! Har Har!

INSIDE INFORMATION

OUR MAN ON THE INSIDE (GEORGE BROUSSARD) FOUGHT THROUGH OUR INTERROGATION TO DELIVER NON-ANSWERS THAT WOULD MAKE ANY POLITICIAN PROUD. HOWEVER, WE DID MANAGE TO SQUEEZE A FEW NUGGETS OF INFORMATION ON THE MYSTERIOUS, LONG OVERDUE, *DNF*.

Q: Nudity. Please tell us you are using the *Unreal* engine for some sweet luvin? We're counting on you to come through for us.

A: It's *Duke Nukem* and we're 3D Realms. We know what you want! But this isn't going to be an R-rated game. We'll leave that to the fans. We'll skirt the edge of the line, but we aren't crossing it. We still want 30-year-old dads to be able to play the game with their 10-year-old kids like they did with *Duke 3D*.

Q: Originally when you showed us *Duke* (the *Quake* engine version two years ago) there were scenes with Duke on different vehicles. Are these still planned? If so, can you tell us a couple of the varieties, or at least one really cool set-up?

A: We want to break up the standard (now a little stale) action of an FPS. You simply get tired of walking around, shooting guys and playing the same basic game we've all played since *Doom* in 1993. So yes, we will be putting Duke on vehicles in several levels. The intent is to change the way you play an FPS game and give you some variety. As for specifics, you'll have to wait to play it.

Q: Bombshell: What type of role is she going to have in the game?

A: I don't think we'll ever do sidekicks. I see them as just getting in the way. Bombshell is merely one of several strong characters in the game — that helps drive the plot.

Q: Please tell me that Duke's character isn't going to go through a "transformation" or discover himself?

A: We'd never change Duke or have him "grow" or discover his feelings. Basically you play Duke on a roller coaster ride of an action movie.

Q: Finally the question everyone wants to know: Are you ever going to f—king finish this game?

A: Yes. When it's done ;)

Steven Head left, we've got no idea where, good luck Steven

"Squadron, look out for stealth fighters."
"Turret gunner, you locked on to that straggler?"
"He's dead meat."
"Cover me, I gotta pay the pizza guy."
"I can't shake them. Can I get some love over here?"

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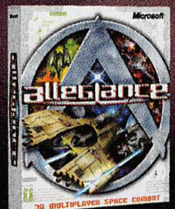

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Microsoft

Alone in the Dark

MISSION: "ANYONE THERE?"

What's the mark?

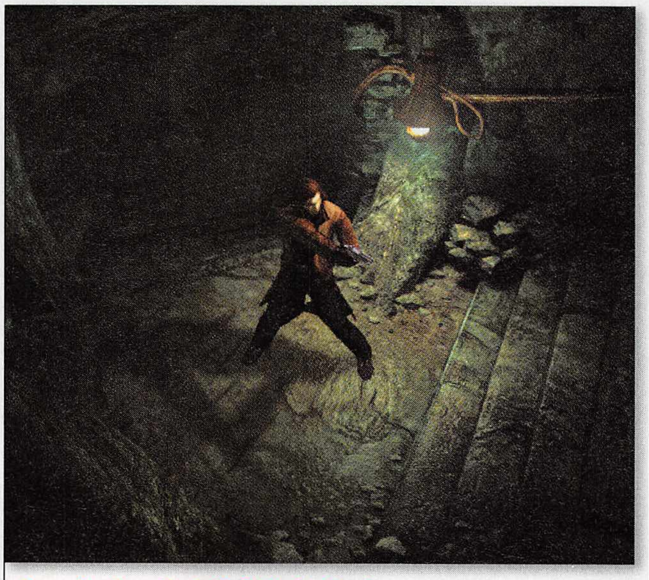
Before there was a *Resident Evil, Half-Life*, or even *System Shock 2*, the game that scared the shit out of us was *Alone in the Dark*. The new *Alone in the Dark* is being brought to life by Paris-based developer DarkWorks. *PC Accelerator* infiltrated the DarkWorks offices and grilled the founders and their development team of over 60 people about what scares them at night. We also wanted to know what they were doing with Mike's mom, and why *Alone in the Dark 4* has what it takes to be one of the scariest games of all time.

Before development started on *Alone in the Dark 4*, the developers wanted to introduce a few new elements to the franchise. First, they wanted to make it a contemporary adventure, taking place in modern society. Second, DarkWorks wanted to stick to the title of the game. The very heart and soul of the game is being in the dark ... alone. The battle between light and darkness is the true essence of the game. Where *Resident Evil* relied on a run-and-gun approach with puzzle elements thrown in here and there, DarkWorks has written a story that will invoke different degrees of fear in the player. Inspirations for the story came from several sources, including Wes Craven, H.P. Lovecraft, and developers' personal experiences with French girls.

Alone in the Dark will have two main characters, as well as 10 NPCs. The two main characters are Carnby and Aline. (Could they possibly have come up with names that were more French and sissified?) While each character has her own motivations and integrated plot line, players can finish the game as one character and then play again as the second.

There will also be characters with which players interact, but these secondary characters will not have a "physical" presence per se. What's interesting about *Alone in the Dark* is that you won't see zombies or vampires or werewolves like in many other titles. Again, the battle is between light and darkness, therefore fear comes from what you can't see. The anticipation of the attack is almost as frightening as the attack itself — at least that's what DarkWorks is hoping and praying for with this game.

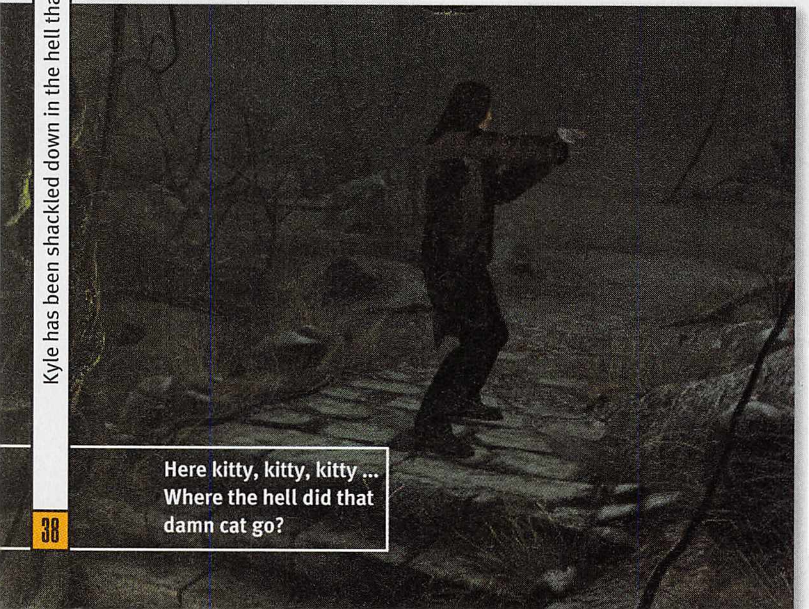
The monsters are not necessarily hard to kill, but the initial fear is going to be overwhelming. There are over 18 different creatures/monsters in *Alone in the Dark*. Aside from varying sizes, each creature is unique, with their own distinct sound, animation, and feel. Since these are supernatural monsters, the weapons have to be supernatural as well. All weapons use some form of light to battle the monsters, which puts an interesting twist on gameplay. Even your flashlight will keep some monsters away from you. With a game of this magnitude and scope, of course DarkWorks is pulling out all the stops to make sure *Alone in the Dark* is a visual masterpiece.



Dammit, where the hell did that cat go?

Aside from the great animations for the characters and monsters (incidentally, Carnby has over 150 different death animations), DarkWorks' rendered backgrounds are some of the most beautiful this industry has ever seen. During the game, players may notice paintings on walls in hallways and in various rooms. DarkWorks also enlisted the help of Marc Botta, a renowned oil painter in Paris, who created numerous oil paintings that were later placed in the game. The end result is nothing short of a museum-quality work of art.

As for gameplay, DarkWorks wanted the game to be accessible for everyone, with a story that was compelling, yet without overly difficult puzzles that frustrate players. There will be some puzzles, but they will not be a hugely crucial part of the gameplay, as in games such as *Resident Evil*. Plan on doing a lot of exploration and discovering terrifying creatures, however. *Alone in the Dark* is dedicating over 3,000 polygons on lead character Carnby alone. Along with realtime lighting and realtime shadows, each monster in *Alone in the Dark* is going to sport over 1,500 polygons. Presently, the



Here kitty, kitty, kitty ... Where the hell did that damn cat go?

Alone in the Dark

DEVELOPER ···> DarkWorks

PUBLISHER ···> Infogrames

RELEASE DATE ···> Whenever...

API SUPPORT ···> A lot, we're sure

Kyle has been shackled down in the hell that is I.T. Most prefer death over that

INSIDE INFORMATION

SO WE ACTUALLY SPOKE TO SOME FRENCH GUYS. AT LEAST THEY WEREN'T FRENCH CANADIANS. HERE IS WHAT THEY HAD TO SAY WHEN OUR THIEF PROPOSITIONED THEM WITH A JERRY LEWIS COLLECTABLE PLATE.

Q: What inspires you when you develop a game such as *Alone in the Dark*?

A: We are all avid film goers, novel readers and in general, every day consumers that are bombarded with advertisements and the media. To determine the different intensity of the creatures, we initially drew up a list of the most unpleasant ways to die and then applied this list to the gameplay and design.

Q: What is going to make *Alone in the Dark* succeed where others have failed?

A: All we can say is that we are paying a lot of attention to the balance between the adrenaline pumping sequences and the resting moments in the game — a good balance between the terror and the fear.

Q: We've noticed that Carnby, the lead character, is somewhat of a pretty boy. What made you decide to go with a more hipper hero?

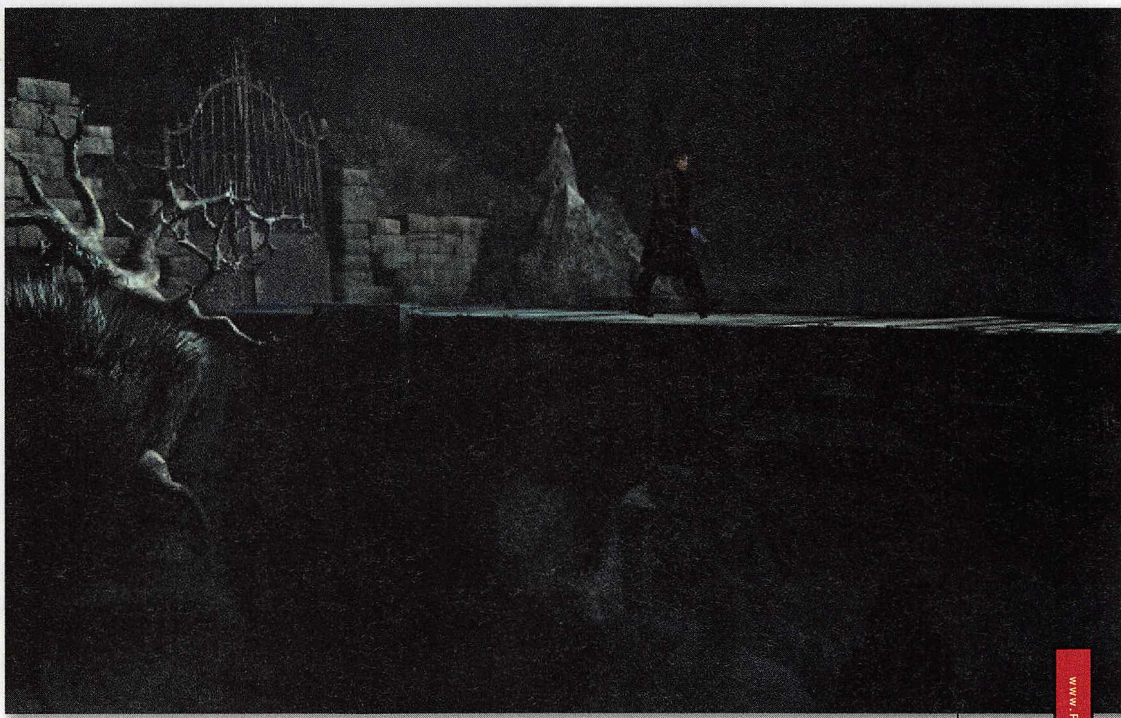
A: Carnby is a modern and positive hero that the player can identify with without any complexes.

Q: You mention that all of your weapons are supernatural but they look pretty conventional to us ...

A: Weapons for the most part work with the element of light. It's their technology that is fantastic, not what they look like — that makes them unique.

Q: What can we expect in *Alone in the Dark* to completely scare the shit out of us? We think Gerard Depardieu running naked through the game would be scary, don't you?

A: Everybody has his own fears. Yours are original, but I think we'd need Gerard's permission to have him in the game. Sorry. We do play on all the different elements of fear, surprise, suspense, horror, and terror. And also the different tones of fear — fear with surprise, anguish with suspense, horror with disgust, terror with persecution, dread with discomfort.



What could make this more frightening: Angelina Jolie in a black dress and her incestuous brother.

framerates and animations are strikingly real and creepy. Taking full benefit of both EAX and A3D, 3D positional audio makes *Alone in the Dark* comparable to a full-fledged horror movie in the making. Take our word for it — you will be impressed, or at least scared shitless with this game.

What's the security?

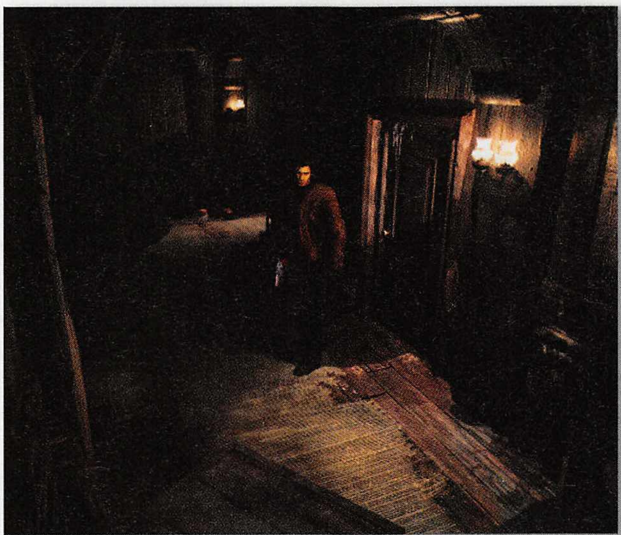
Alone in the Dark is being developed by Paris-based DarkWorks. Founded by Antoine Villette and Guillaume Gouraud, DarkWorks has over 60 employees working on *Alone in the Dark*, as well as commissioned artists doing exclusive oil paintings for the game. And believe it or not, DarkWorks is a European software developer that's ahead of schedule.

What's the security?

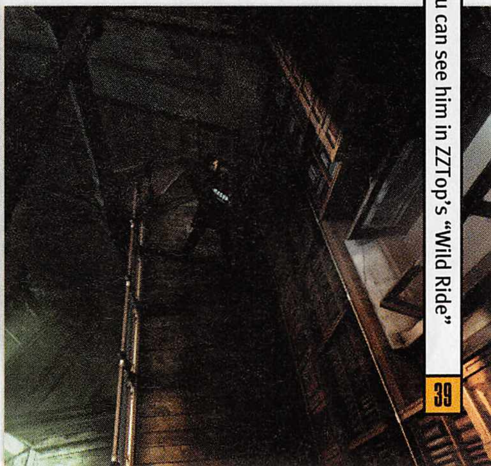
Those of us who played the first three *Alone in the Dark* games are probably getting a bit long in the tooth and many of today's gamers don't have a clue about this franchise. *Alone in the Dark* was a graphical masterpiece and a solid adventure game, but DarkWorks hasn't really done anything in 3D. Will the engine look good enough? Will the gameplay be updated, and if not, can the old gameplay stand the test of time? From what we've seen, *Alone In The Dark 4* has a great deal of promise, but of these nine "hot" games, this is the game about which we are the least sure.

What's the payoff?

We need a good scare-the-shit-out-of-you game and *Alone in the Dark 4* may deliver. From the wicked-ass graphics to the whacked out monsters, the developers have poured their hearts and souls into this game and it really shows.



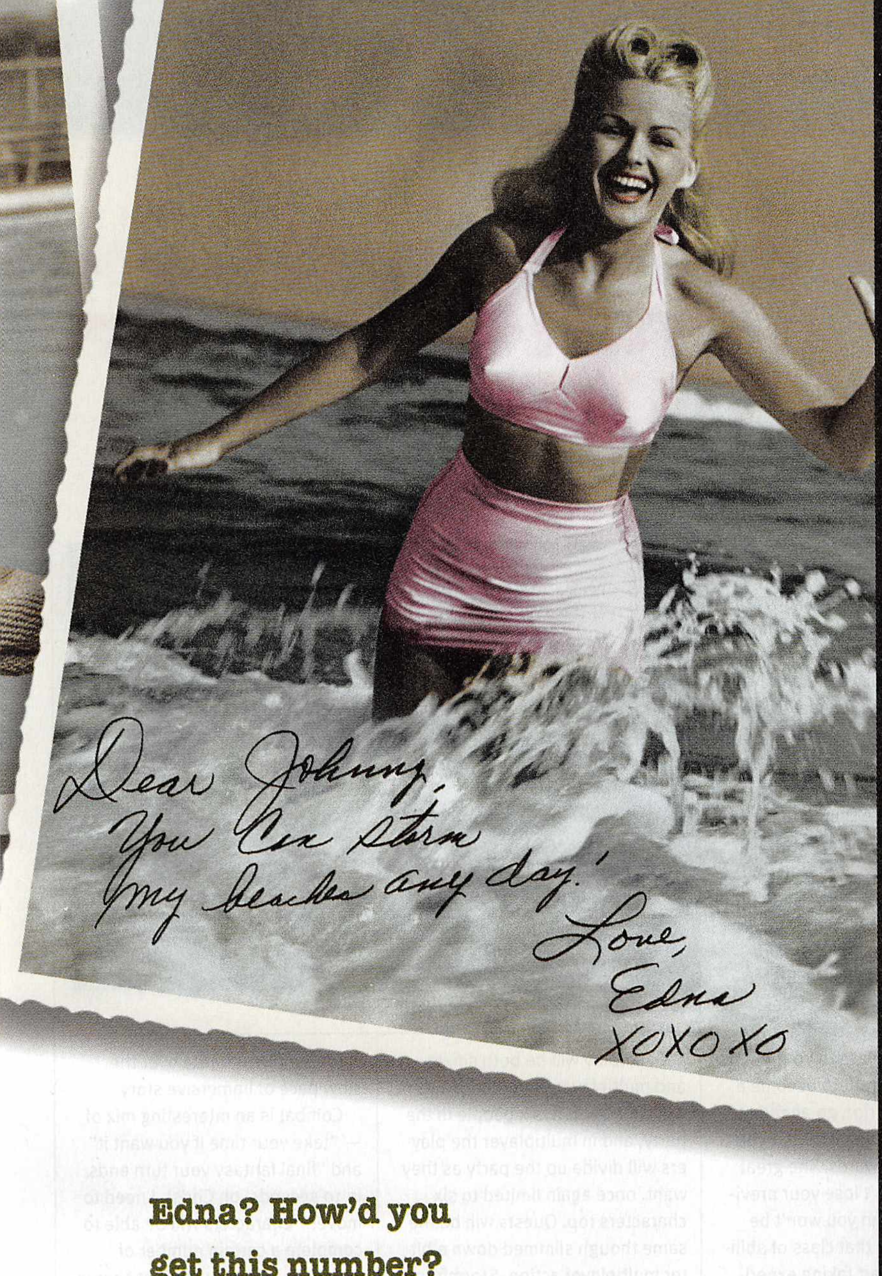
Shit, my old lady is going to be pissed if I don't find that f—kin' cat of hers.



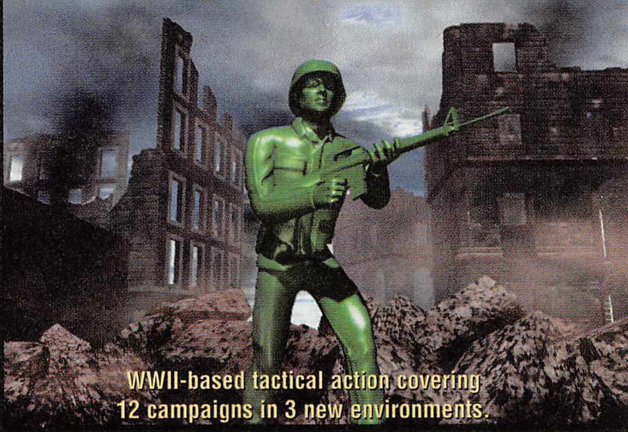
Eric Smith's gone back into the porn business full-time. You can see him in ZZTop's "Wild Ride"

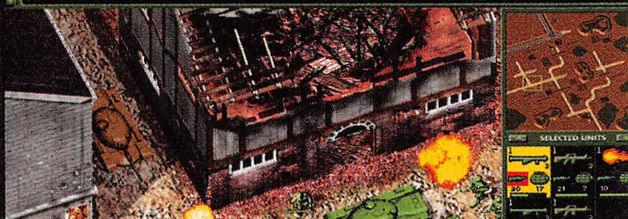
Dear Johnny,
Next time you're
in a foxhole, think
of me...
Love Always,
Blanche
Johnny!
Come liberate
me! Love
Ethel
Johnny,
I miss your
plastic fantastic!
Call me...
Love, Agnes

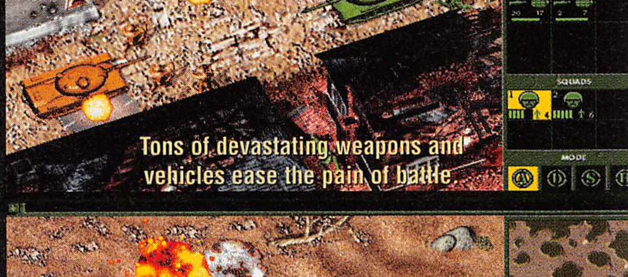
PC
CD
ROM


Dear Johnny,
You can storm
my beaches any day!
Love,
Edna
XOXOXO

Edna? How'd you get this number? No! I can't talk right now...we're about to launch a major offensive!


WWII-based tactical action covering 12 campaigns in 3 new environments.


SELECTED UNITS
SQUADS
MODE
Tons of devastating weapons and vehicles ease the pain of battle.


SELECTED UNITS
SQUADS
MODE
2-4 player competition over the internet with 18 new multiplayer maps.

ARMY MEN
WORLD WAR
REAL COMBAT. PLASTIC MEN.
3DO

Pool of Radiance II: Ruins of Myth Dranor

MISSION: "EVERYONE IN THE POOL!"

What's the mark?

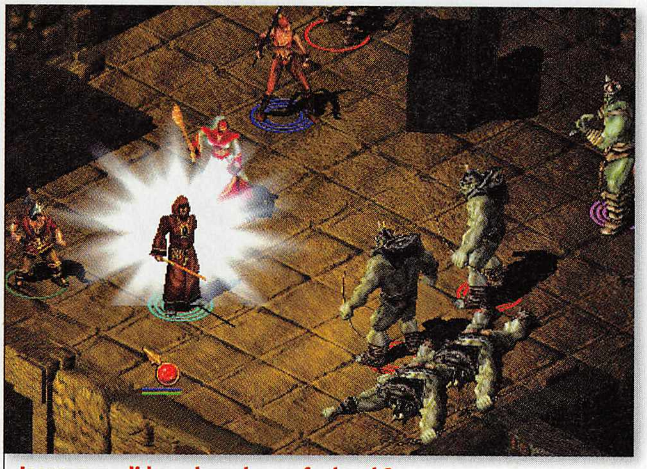
If you swing the RPG way, then you are a happy camper, *Baldur's Gate* has rejuvenated this genre and developers are lining up to get people back into the fantasy role-playing game. One such developer is Stormfront, who is working feverishly on *Pool of Radiance II: Ruins of Myth Dranor*. The sequel to the classic *Pool of Radiance*, this time the game will have 3D characters and is based on the third edition rules of Dungeons and Dragons. When we had a chance to infiltrate the Mattel Interactive compound, we didn't hesitate to bust open all the important information.

Based in the Forgotten Realms universe of Dungeons and Dragons, *PoRII* brings the player back 10 years after the heroes in the first game took care of the Pool in the city of New Phlan. Trouble is brewing back at the old Pool. Seems everyone who gets touched by the crap emanating from it turns undead (Similar, we are told, to watching "Ally McBeal").

The player will control a group of hearty newbie adventurers into the Ruins of Myth Dranor. This isn't on purpose, mind you. Apparently the guy who was sent first (you know, the guy just slightly less powerful than Superman), Athen gets his ass handed to him and your team of chuckleheads makes the choice to head there to try to solve the problem. Myth Dranor isn't a place for newbies, a fallen Elf city — evil rules it now, much like Detroit or Trenton. In the course of the game, your ragtag group of wimps will go from first level schlubs all the way up to 16th level bad-asses. You'll own that city by the end of the game.

Every great RPG has to have a foundation upon which to draw its story, to immerse the player, and upon which to build itself. The most basic part of this foundation is the rules. The granddaddy of RPG rules are the Dungeon and Dragons rulebooks from TSR, currently in the second edition. But TSR is quietly working on a revolution in their realm, the third edition of D&D rules. *Pool of Radiance II* (*PoR2*) will be the first game to integrate these rules.

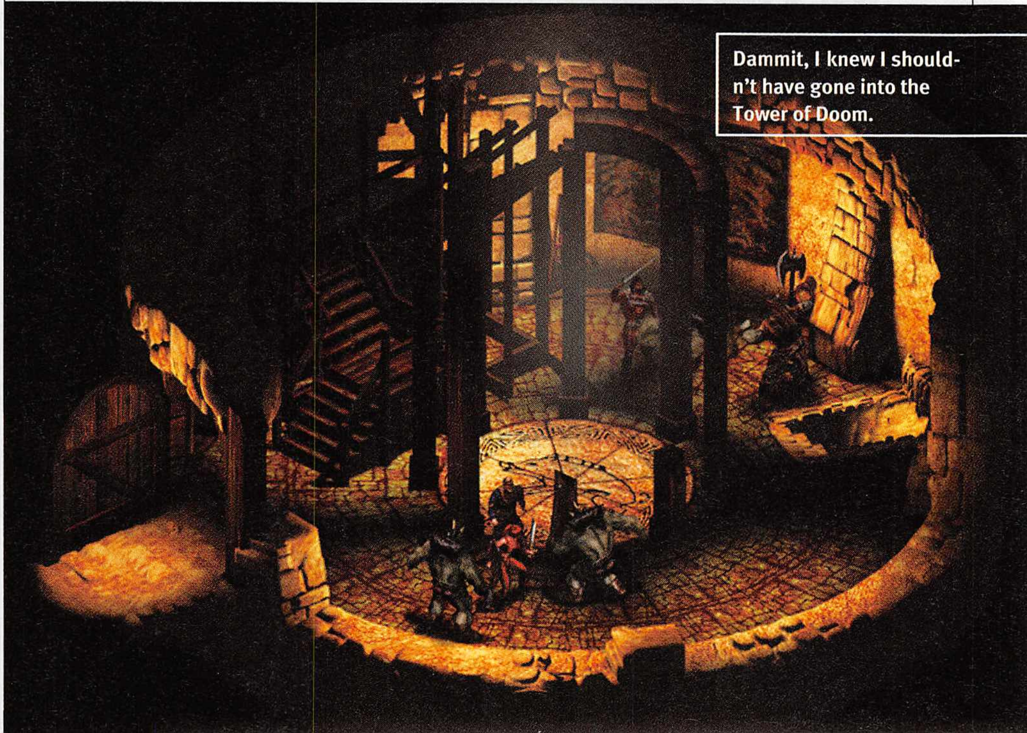
The coolest new feature is the ability to multi-class to your hearts content. If you want to become a mage/thief/warrior, go ahead at each level you can pick what you want to work towards. The great thing is you don't lose your previous skills, though you won't be able to increase that class of abilities until you start taking experience with that group.



Jesus man, did you have beans for lunch?

Gameplay will be both single- and multiplayer. Solo, the player will control up to six people in the party, and in multiplayer the players will divide up the party as they want, once again limited to six characters top. Quests will be the same though slimmed down a bit for multiplayer action. Stormfront realizes most people in multiplayer want the fun of battle over the slow pace of immersive story.

Combat is an interesting mix of — "take your time if you want it" and "final fantasy your turn ends in 10 seconds, oh Christ, I need to move!" Characters will be able to complete a certain number of actions in each round. That character's round has a timer that slowly



Dammit, I knew I shouldn't have gone into the Tower of Doom.

Pool of Radiance II

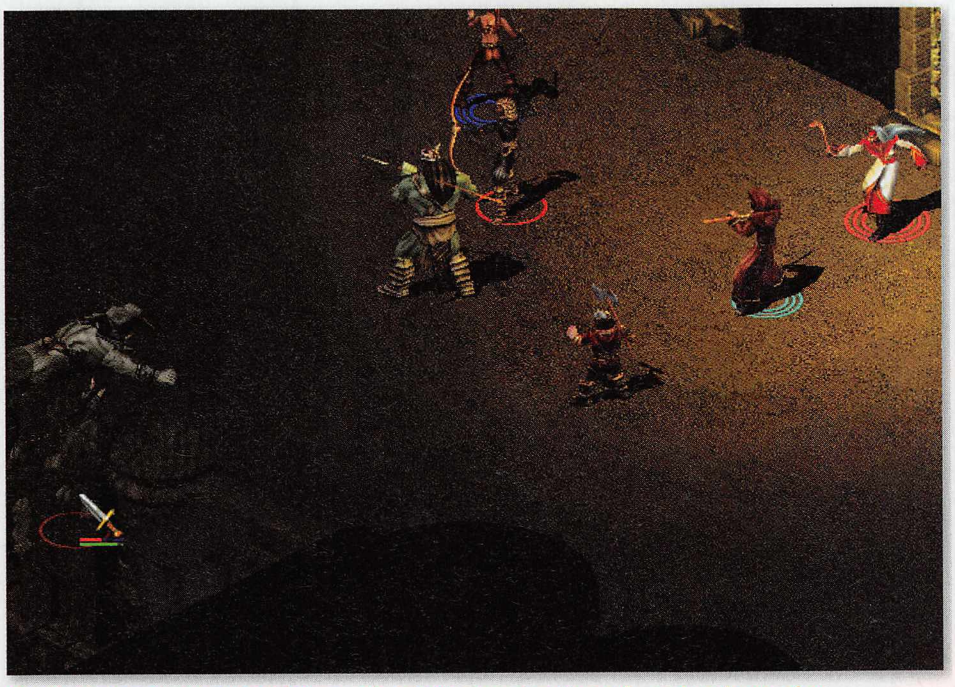
DEVELOPER ··· Stormfront

PUBLISHER ··· Mattel

RELEASE DATE ··· This year

API SUPPORT ··· Whatever

Q! Doroquez has gone back to the Q continuum. Live Long and Prosper!



Wonder Twins powers activate! Shape of ... a D&D character. Form of ... a closed magazine.

ticks down — when it's done, the next character's round begins. In single-player you can set that timer to 10 years if you'd like, but in multiplayer whoever is hosting the game can set that bad boy to a specific time. This game keeps up a brisk pace — no laggers please.

The look of the game is what the genre has come to expect, isometric view with prerended backgrounds. The difference from *Baldur's Gate* and *Diablo II* will be the fully 3D characters. Each one is poly based, including the monsters, and some of them, like the main evil draco-liche you'll end up tangling with, can be extremely large on the screen, dwarfing a normal character.

Developers are shooting for the holiday season with this one, which would make *PoR2* the first D&D Third Edition game on the market. Being first with a hot new system and having what looks like a solid game to back it up certainly has us very interested.

Where is it?

Both Stormfront Studios and Mattel Interactive are in Marin County, California. It was only a short drive up Highway 101 for our spies to check out their digs and we were impressed. Mattel has a large group of developers under its wings, most likely to directly compete with its major toy competition turned gaming giant Hasbro.

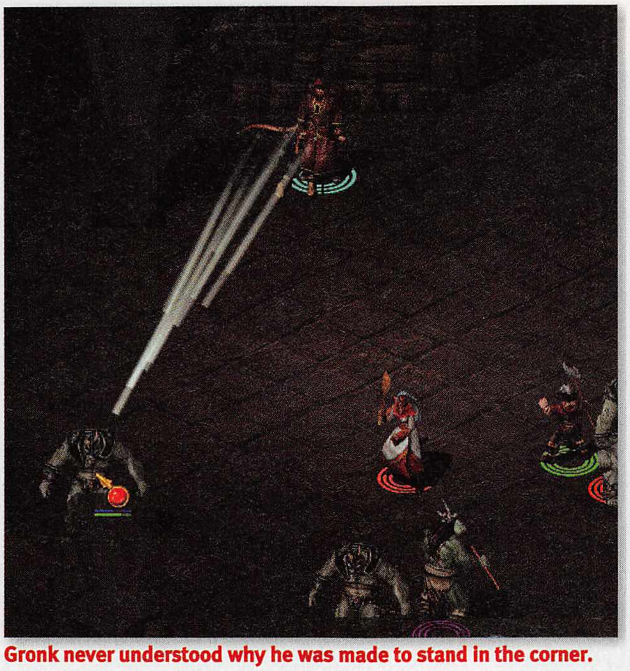
What's the security?

D&D 3rd Edition is new, and there are likely to be a few bugs here and there. Sure, the geniuses at TSR are trying to make the rules simpler and easier to understand, but the government did that years ago with the tax code and it's not much better.

The real hurdle though for the game will be making certain it has no bugs when it ships and a story folks want to get into ... undead dragons are pretty cool though.

What's the payoff?

The payoff could be another *Baldur's Gate* of a game, solid graphics, a gripping story, and the D&D third edition's freedom to play as you want to play. Who doesn't want to be a thief/mage/cleric? Or any other combination you can think of, and allowing characters to get all the way to 16th level means a huge amount of experience gaining and character building — which is what RPGs are generally all about.



Gronk never understood why he was made to stand in the corner.

INSIDER INFORMATION

WE ASKED THE DEVELOPERS AT POOL OF RADIANCE FIVE SIMPLE QUESTIONS, BUT THE LOUSY BASTARDS DIDN'T ANSWER ANY OF THEM. SO WE WENT TO SOME OF OUR "OTHER" SOURCES TO GET THE INSIDE DIRT. PLEASE WELCOME LOCAL SAN FRANCISCO PIMP (AND CRACK DEALER), JIMMY SUPAFLY.

Q: You guys are trying to muscle in on the RPG market, which lately has been dominated by Interplay. You afraid they'll send some RPG goons to take you out?

A: Sheet, MoFo! I like to see dem little bitches try. I be busting a cap in deir asses and shit.

Q: Characters are going to stay the entire game in the *Ruins of Myth Dranor* as a setting and they can also make it all the way up to the 16th level, so are these guys going to be the toughest bastards in the town when this thing is finished?

A: Hell no. The toughest bastards in town r my boyzz. They sell da crack rock, then turn and crack yo head open with a rock. Nobody be f—kin wit da boyzz.

Q: Folks that remember *Pool of Radiance* enjoyed the combat system quite a bit. Anything special you are doing this time around?

A: I gots all kinds of especial moves but I don't know 'bout callin' that pile of urine a pool of radienting — that shit stinks. My main combat system is my AK-47 and my bitch-slap for da ho's.

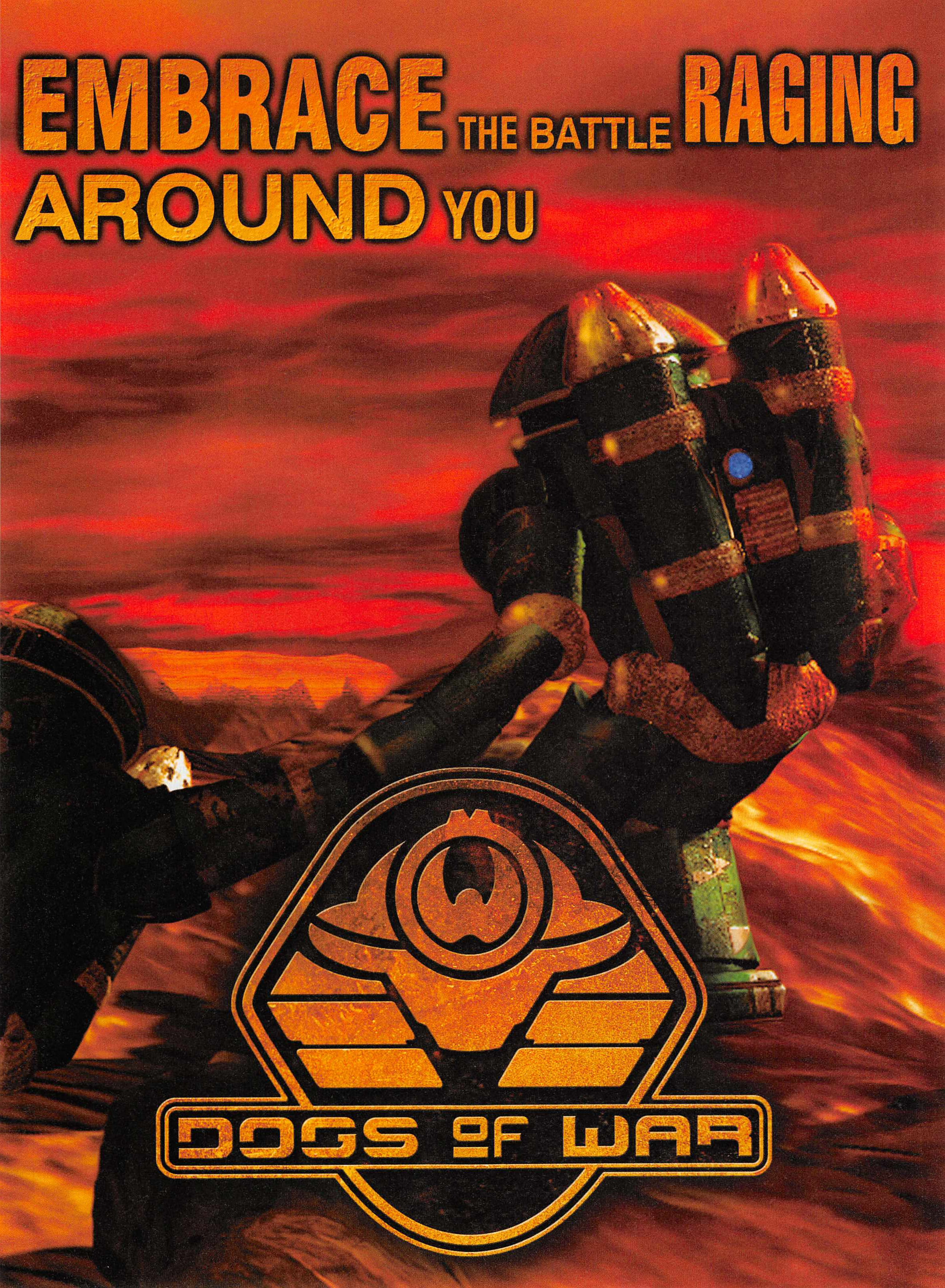
Q: The main villain this time around is a female and she's kinda hot, but what's up with that dragon hand? How does she spank off with that?

A: Damn you cracka's gots to deal wit da bitches. Ain't no ho o' mine who be runnin' around being da main anything. Plus the dragon handed bitches just don't sell — it's all about supply and demand. As for spanking off, I give my bitches all the spankin dey'll eva need.

Q: *PoR2* and *Baldur's Gate* get into the ring of death, who is coming out of that one alive?

A: Shit, leetle man, I ain't got no damn idea what da hell you be talkin' about. Do you want the usual he-she and eight-ball of crack or what? Matt?

Enemy Blunderbuss
CAMERA
COMMAND
INFO
GROUPS
CARGO
TALONSOFT
Silicon Dreams
PC CD ROM
3D ACCELERATOR REQUIRED
RATING PENDING
RP
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB


EMBRACE THE BATTLE RAGING
AROUND YOU
DOGS OF WAR

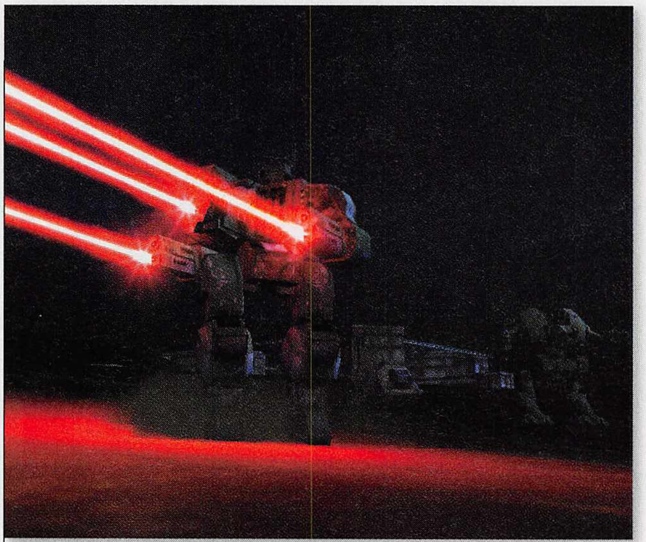
Mech Warrior 4

MISSION: "JUMP"

What's the mark?

Besides playing Strip Yahtzee with your neighbor's wife, FASA's BattleTech is the most fun you'll have with six-sided dice and a pencil. As a board game, BattleTech kicks serious ass. But as a PC game, something always felt wrong.

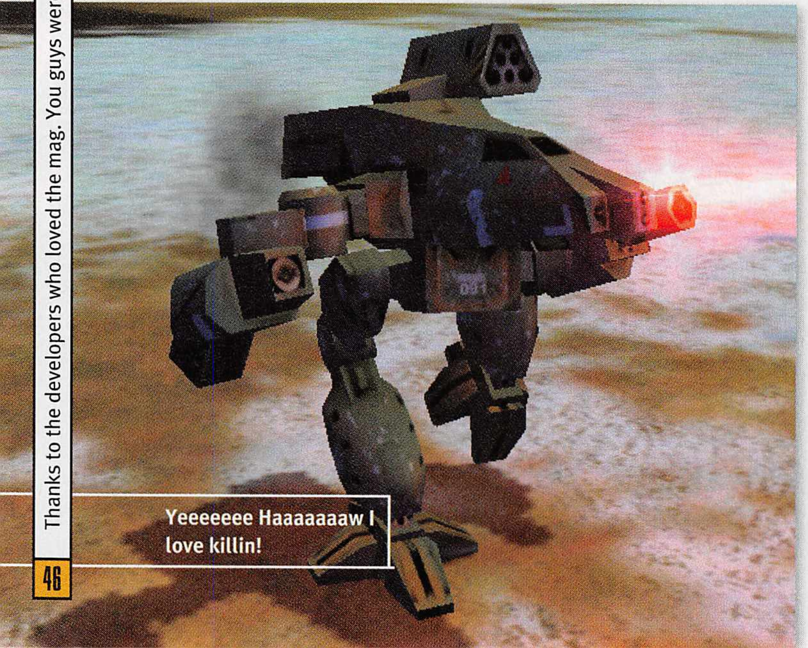
Last year, *MechWarrior 3* was one sexy looking Mech game—hell, it was the Liz Hurley of Mech games. But it lacked key ingredients like jumping attacks (AKA death from above), ramming attacks, and proper collision detection. *MechWarrior 4*—the tenth computer adaptation (not counting expansion packs) of BattleTech—will finally add these longtime missing ingredients.



Hey Chuck, check out that family wagon over there. Bet you I can blow it up in one shot.

We decided to break into the *MechWarrior 4* design labs for a closer look. Sneaking around like our name was Biz Markie, we uncovered all of *MechWarrior 4*'s dirty little secrets. What we discovered first were the new 3D graphics; goodbye cheesy looking lasers, hello studly beams of death! The terrain engine has been remodeled to support a ton of trees and other vegetation, which give the landscape a much more organic feel. New structures like military bunkers, civilian powerplants, and other buildings have new textures that make them look more realistic when they "snap, crackle, pop" under our behemoth Mech-anized feet.

Next, we stumbled upon improvements made to the Mechs themselves. No longer will they look stiff and awkward as they climb hills or collide with buildings. This time around, their models have been given even more articulation to allow more realistic looking turning, falling, and colliding. We've seen them ourselves, and they look slick—less like wooden puppets, and more like nimble, yet heavy, vehicles of mass destruction!



Yeeeeeee Haaaaaaaw I love killin!

MechWarrior 4 is also introducing several new Mech designs (to be appearing in the boardgame compendiums later this year). This is a major step for the *MechWarrior* series given the fact that the Mechs have always been at least a year behind its paper & pencil counterpart. There are over 20 Mechs in total, which compliments the game's 30+ missions rather nicely.

The missions are attached to a branching tree system that not only assures an entirely different campaign setting with each choice you make, but it means *MechWarrior 4* will have multiple endings! Pay attention goober, here comes the good part: You can play through *MechWarrior 4*'s branching campaign cooperatively with another human player and actually argue over which path to take. Hell, that's almost as good as free beer—wait ... that's crazy talk.

Multiplayer is getting a kick in the face as well. This time around, *MechWarrior 4* will have *Quake*-style Client/Server play (anyone can join a live server at anytime during the match).

Plus, net-goons and clan-monkeys can host a dedicated server to speed up Internet performance. Multiplayer match-types will include various forms of Capture, Defend/Assault, King of the Hill, Standard Deathmatch, Team Deathmatch, and Cooperative.

MechWarrior 4

DEVELOPER → FASA
PUBLISHER → Microsoft
RELEASE DATE → Your Guess
API SUPPORT → D3D, Duh!

Where is it?

A leader in sci-fi tabletop wargaming for over 15 years, FASA continues to publish BattleTech boxed sets and sourcebooks. FASA Interactive, a division of FASA dedicated to entertainment software, splintered off to handle the growing demand for BattleTech videogames and simulations. Basing their operations near Seattle and teaming up with industry giant, Microsoft, FASA Interactive's primary goal is to create the most realistic 40' Mech simulation ever seen. FASA Interactive has two key BattleTech projects to be released later this year: *MechCommander 2*, and *MechWarrior 4*.

What's the security?

The primary challenge is to keep *MechWarrior 4* consistent with the BattleTech universe. This means

INSIDE INFORMATION

IT WAS JUST PAST MIDNIGHT, AND WE HAD WORKED OUR WAY DEEP INTO THE *MECHWARRIOR 4* DEVELOPMENT FACILITIES. WE HAD JUST ABOUT GIVEN UP WHEN WE FOUND MICROSOFT'S TJ WAGNER. HE PUT UP VERY LITTLE STRUGGLE AS WE TIED HIM UP AND ASKED HIM FIVE QUESTIONS!

Q: Is it true FASA Interactive kidnapped the *Heavy Gear 2* mascot?

A: Sorry, I can't comment on past misdemeanors committed by our team members.

Q: What is the *MechWarrior 4* team's weekly BCR (Beer Consumption Rate)?

A: Judging by the parties of the past two weeks, no where near the weekly HACR (hard alcohol consumption rate), vodka coming in at number one with whiskey and tequila tied for second.

Q: Will *MechWarrior 4* have crowded city streets with thousands of pedestrians on which to step?

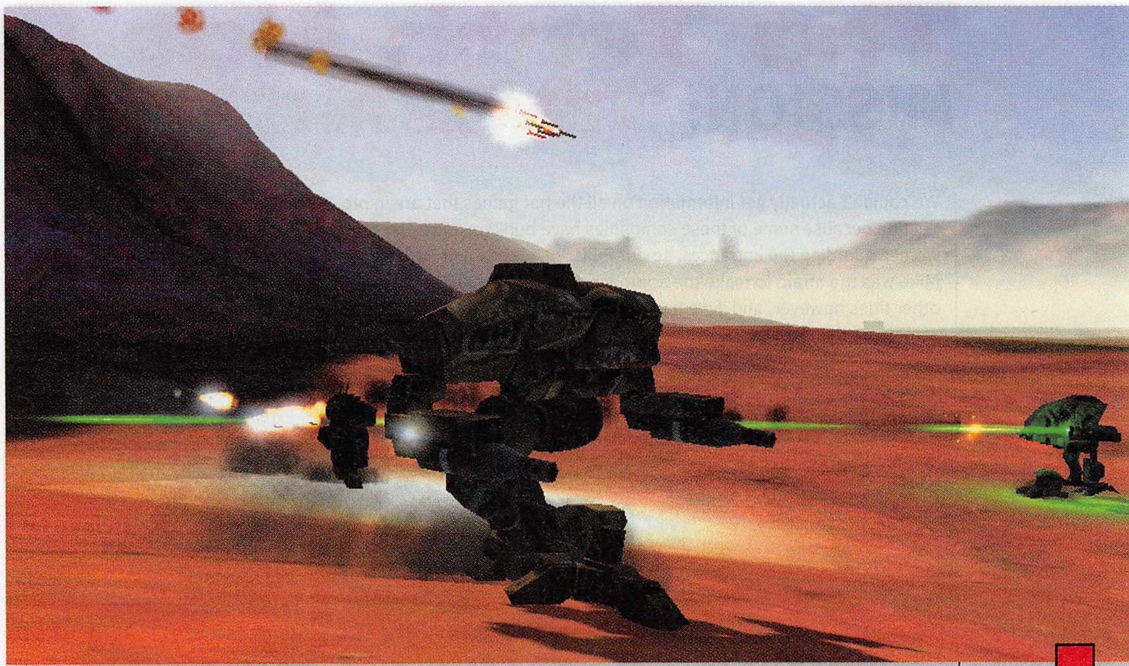
A: Yes, there will be densely populated cities, but the stepping on people thing is a touchy issue lately. We'll have to wait and see on that one (read cheat code).

Q: Is it true *MechWarrior* programmers get all the hot chicks?

A: Well, David Berger (SIM coder) has a thing for Sarah-Michelle Geller and she's hot, but hasn't returned his calls.

Q: Be honest, what really sucked about *MechWarrior 3*?

A: Multiplayer let a lot of people down.



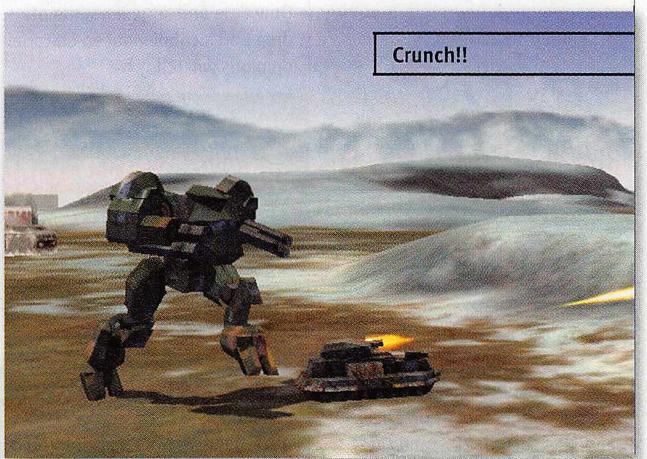
Red 5 standing by. Porkins Pull up! Pull UP!

every weapon, Mech, or piece of equipment must function exactly like it does in the boardgame. There are BattleTech fans out there who expect *MechWarrior 4* to be as close to real BattleTech as possible, and will whine, scream, and bitch if even the slightest Small Laser is out of sync.

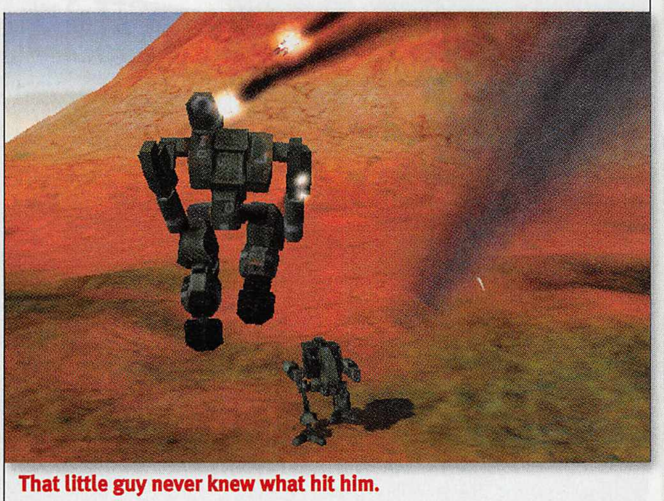
The secondary challenge is weeding out all the new problems associated with developing a sequel. Sure, *MechWarrior 4* fixes the inconsistencies #3 had, but what if all these tweaks to the engine create a new batch of gameplay problems? We hope FASA Interactive and Microsoft can squash these new blemishes should they arise.

What's the payoff?

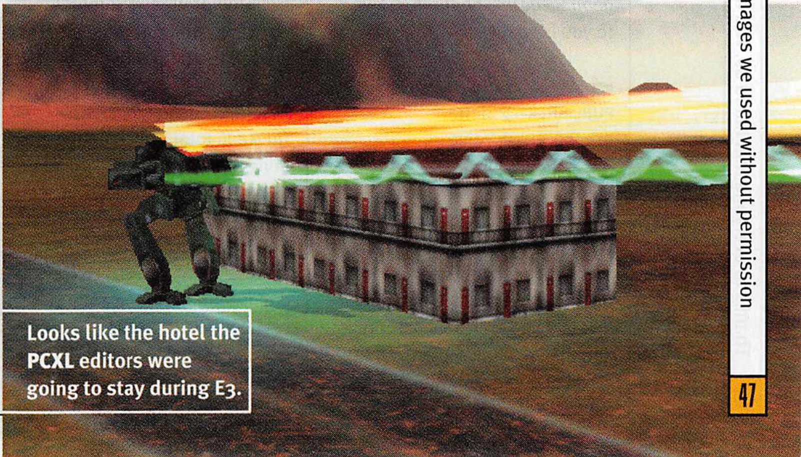
To determine *MechWarrior 4*'s chances for success, we went back and played *MechWarrior 3* for a while. After reexamining the allure and replayability of *MechWarrior 3*, we believe *MechWarrior 4* will be successful if it's truly another step closer to the perfect Mech-combat simulator. FASA Interactive needs to listen closely to its giant BattleTech fan base, addressing their concerns may just guarantee success.



Crunch!!



That little guy never knew what hit him.



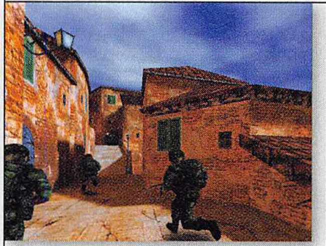
Looks like the hotel the PCXL editors were going to stay during E3.

Thanks to the people who owned the copyrights on the images we used without permission

The Tenth Hot Game

MISSION: "THE TRUTH IS OUT THERE"

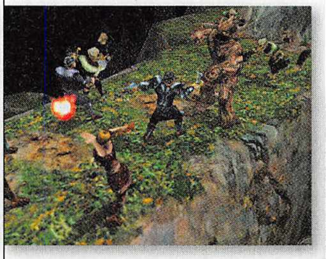
We couldn't actually get information on all the hot games that are in production because some of these companies have bunkers and bitter old women guarding the entrances, so our **PCXL** P.I. was turned back and Mike was too afraid to make the approach. We do know about these other titles however, and if we had to choose a 10th hot game, it would come from this list.



Team Fortress II

PUBLISHER ···> Sierra
DEVELOPER ···> Valve

We did a preview last month on this bad boy and would love to talk about it every month until it comes out. If the dream becomes a reality, you can throw out your TV because you'll be playing *TF2* everyday.



Dungeon Siege

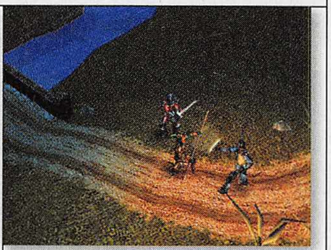
PUBLISHER ···> Microsoft
DEVELOPER ···> Digital Anvil

Even after your done with *Diablo II*, you'll want more of that hack-and-slash action RPG, and *Dungeon Siege* will be there to give it to you in spades.

Half-Life 2

PUBLISHER ···> Sierra
DEVELOPER ···> Valve

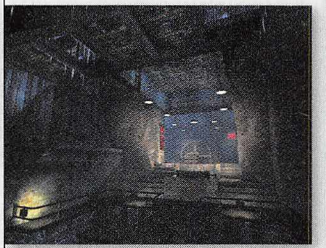
This one hasn't even been announced yet, and is still years away from release. Our guess is that by the time this game comes out **PCXL** will be dead and buried due to some radical Senator type and their diabolical plan to rid the world of quality entertainment. (Guess what? We were right.)



Neverwinter Nights

PUBLISHER ···> Interplay
DEVELOPER ···> Bioware

A fully 3D RPG that incorporates the third edition of D&D rules, and will be multiplayer with dungeon masters setting up games. It really might be D&D as you've wanted it for so many years, then again it might be just like *Baldur's Gate*. Only time and large amounts of drug and alcohol induced editorial opinions will tell.



Return to Castle Wolfenstein

PUBLISHER ···> Activision
DEVELOPER ···> Gray Matter Interactive Studios with Id Software watching over the whole process like a Nazi guard dog.

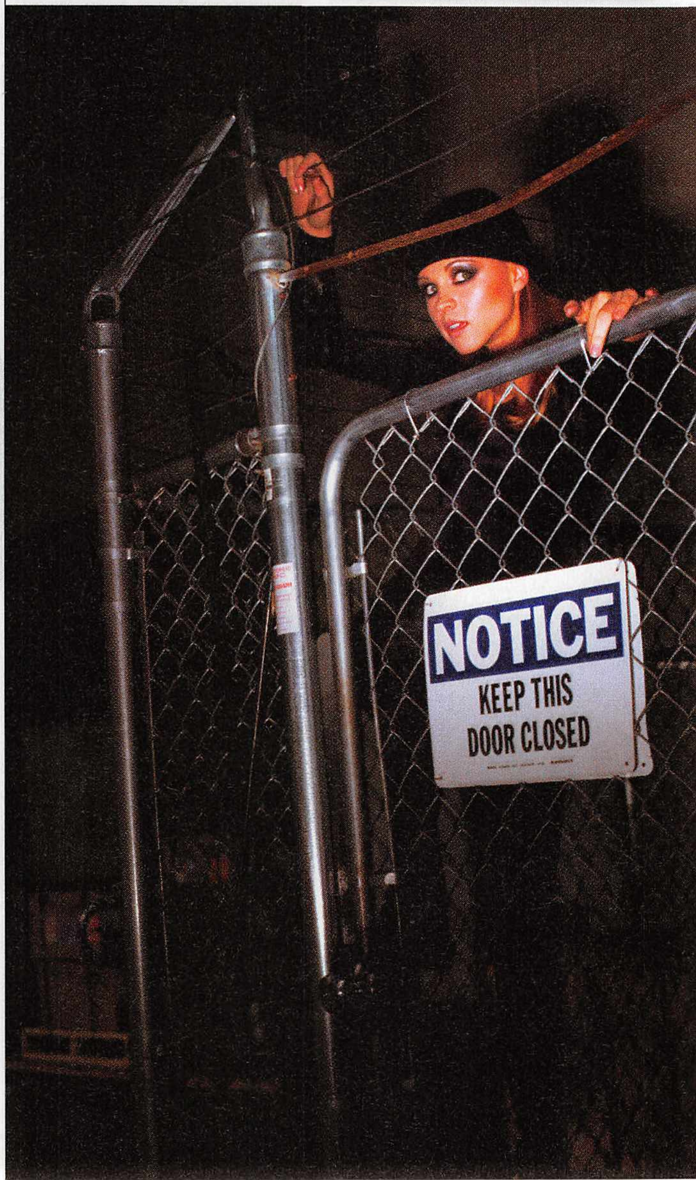
Return to Castle Wolfenstein is a *Quake III* total conversion that will bring the players back into Nazi Germany as an American secret operative. Players put a halt to the Nazi's plan to raise the dead and create an army of Nazi soldiers, as opposed to the living army of Nazi soldiers. Killing Nazi's in the *Quake III* engine? Man, it doesn't get much better than this, unless we were currently being blown.

Unreal II

PUBLISHER ···> GT Interactive
DEVELOPER ···> Legend

Cliffy B proved to the world that *Unreal* is not a one time shot, and *Unreal II* is going to be the third installment of the *Unreal* series. Expect ass-kicking galore. If anyone is going to knock *Half-Life* out, it's going to be the *Unreal* team. Of course, *Unreal II* is actually being developed by Legend (makers of *Wheel Of Time*, instead of the original developers Epic) and will be released approximately two centuries before *Half-Life 2*.

More games? Damn straight, folks. We are living in a wondrous age where there are so many good games coming out, we couldn't put all of them into one magazine. Plus, we want you to buy the magazine in the future. But wait, since we're cancelled, as our old friend Limey says, "Screw you!" Find out about the games yourself, you lousy bastards! And what about our PCXL P.I.? Where will she fit into the situation? Oh, she'll fit in quiet nicely, we assure you.



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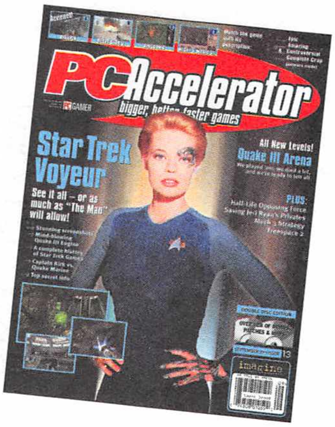

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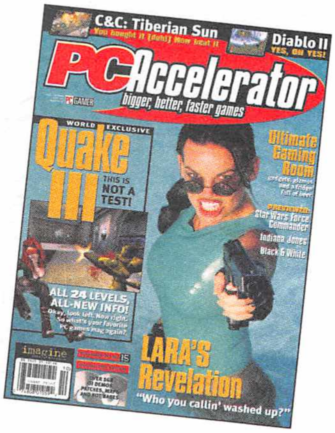

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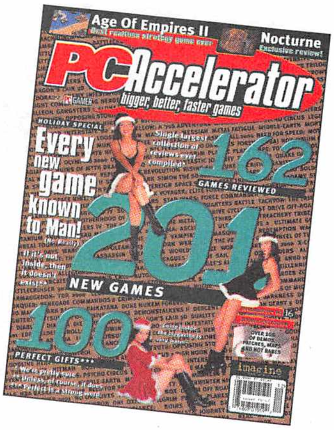

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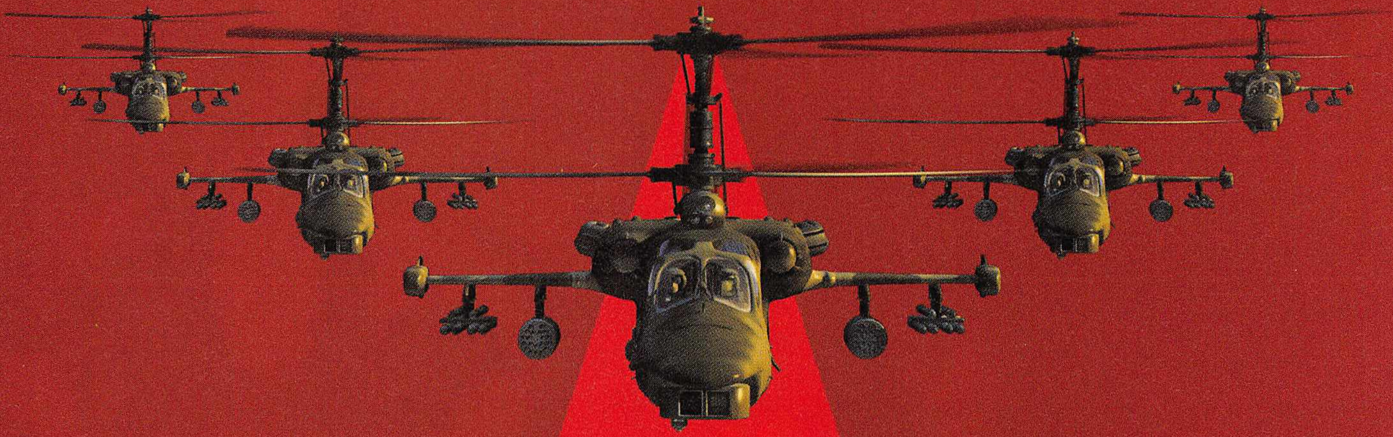

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CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
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SIMIS

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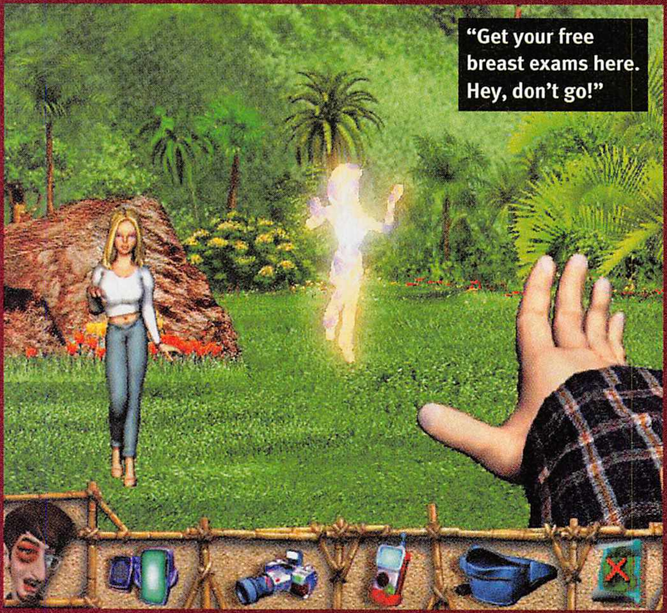
www.gtgames.com

Go to **http://pcxl.ign.com/gaming411**: Product Number 29

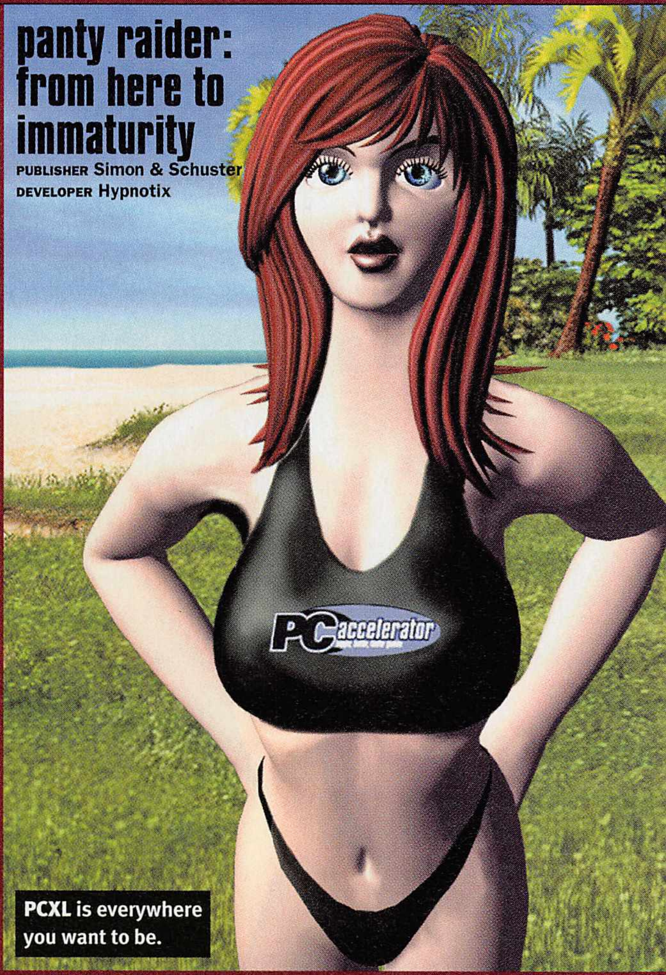
You don't need to be a rocket scientist to understand these pictures. They speak the international language of graphics. We've also taken the time to write ridiculous captions in hopes that we could cause mass confusion. Send feedback on "Money Shots" to letters@pcxl.com

panty raider: from here to immaturity

PUBLISHER Simon & Schuster
DEVELOPER Hypnotix



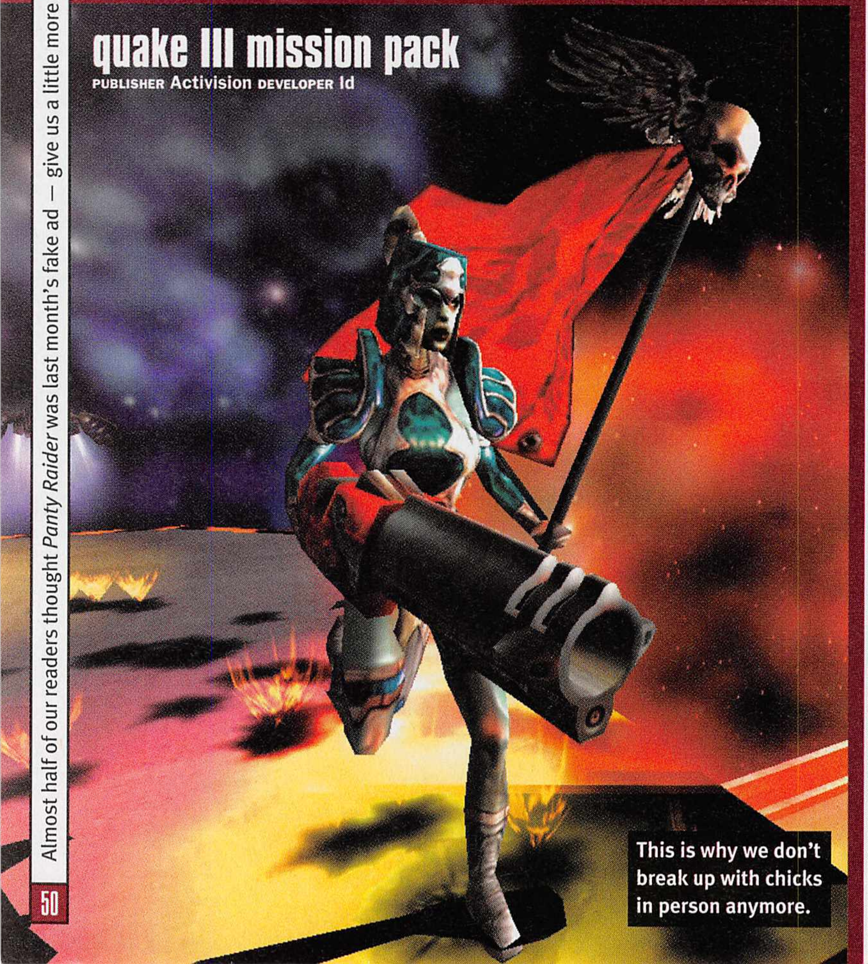
"Get your free breast exams here. Hey, don't go!"



PCXL is everywhere you want to be.

quake III mission pack

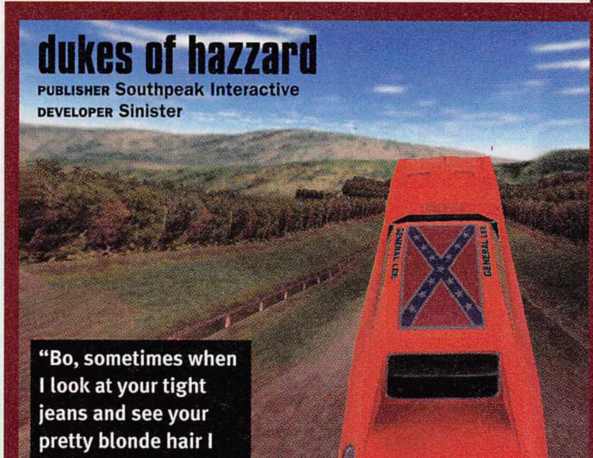
PUBLISHER Activision **DEVELOPER** Id



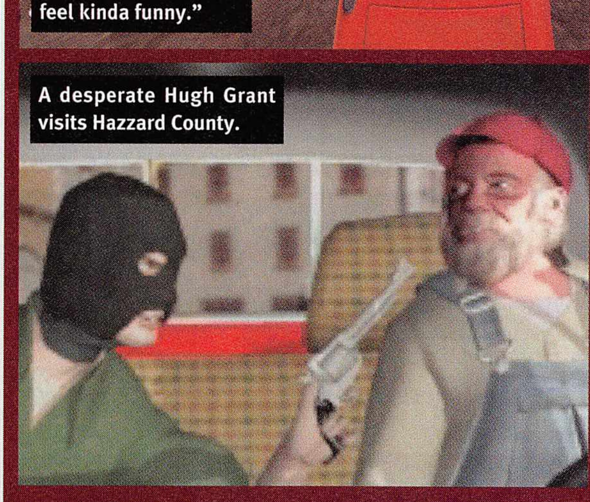
This is why we don't break up with chicks in person anymore.

dukes of hazzard

PUBLISHER Southpeak Interactive
DEVELOPER Sinister



"Bo, sometimes when I look at your tight jeans and see your pretty blonde hair I feel kinda funny."

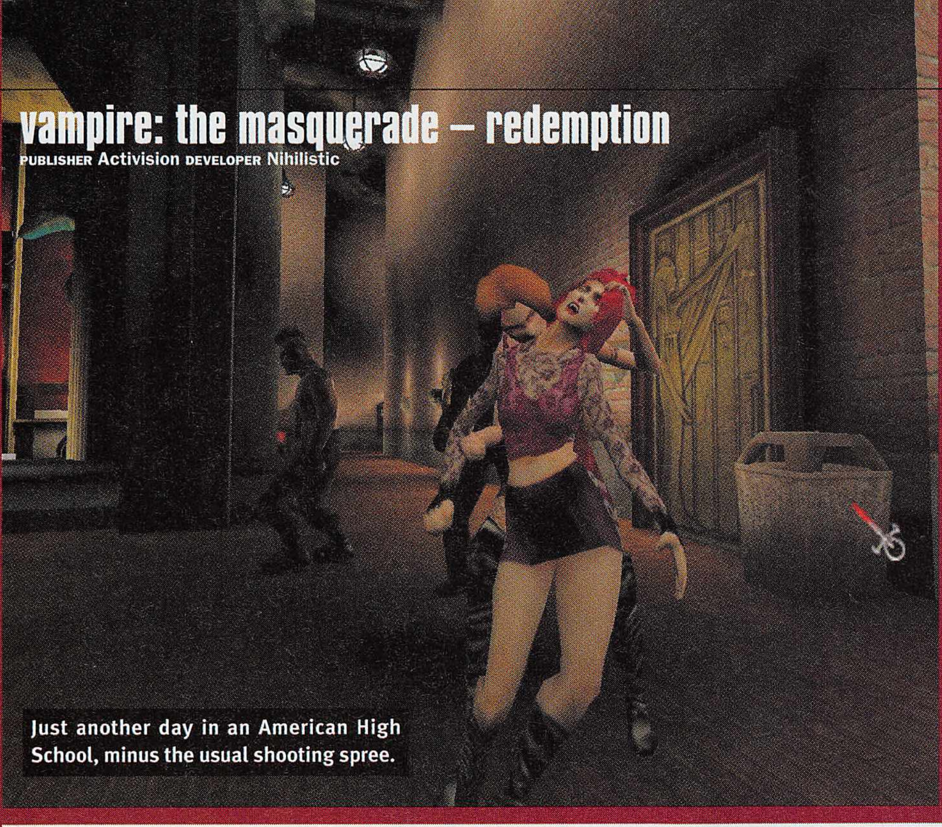


A desperate Hugh Grant visits Hazzard County.

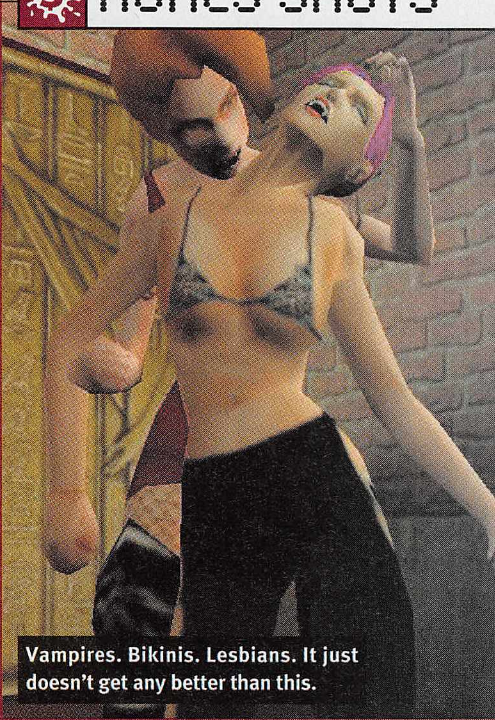
Almost half of our readers thought *Panty Raider* was last month's fake ad — give us a little more credit

vampire: the masquerade – redemption

PUBLISHER Activision **DEVELOPER** Nihilistic



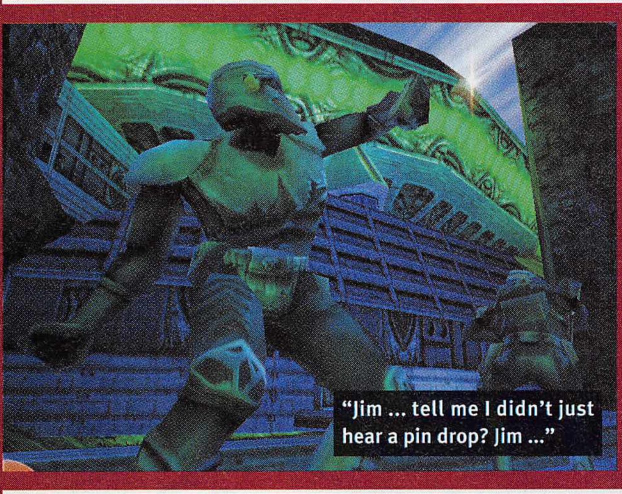
Just another day in an American High School, minus the usual shooting spree.



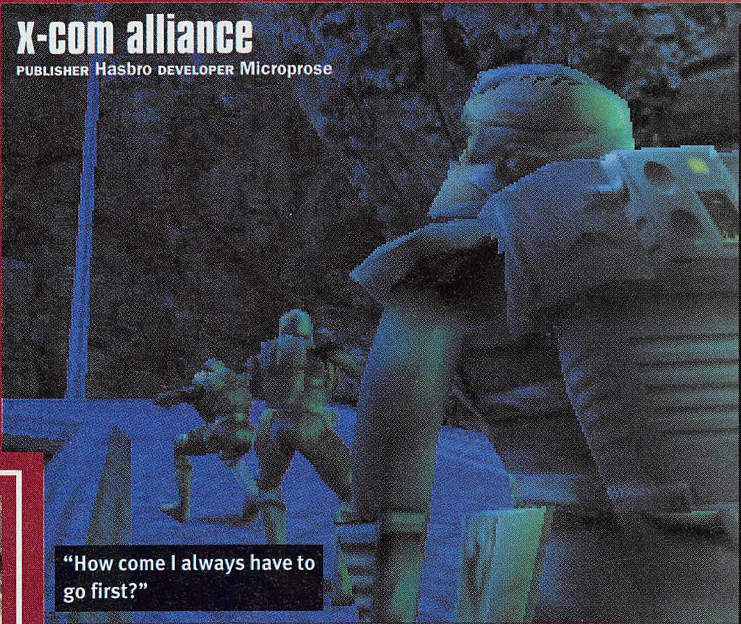
Vampires. Bikinis. Lesbians. It just doesn't get any better than this.

x-com alliance

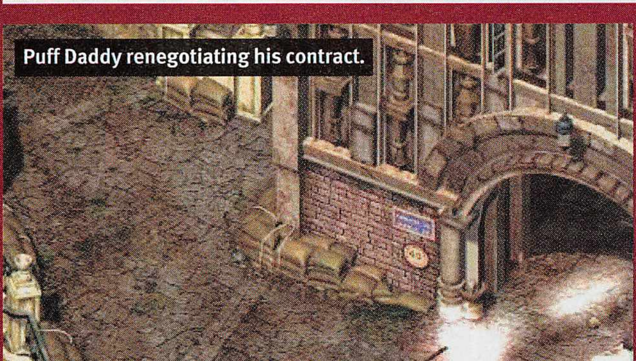
PUBLISHER Hasbro **DEVELOPER** Microprose



"Jim ... tell me I didn't just hear a pin drop? Jim ..."



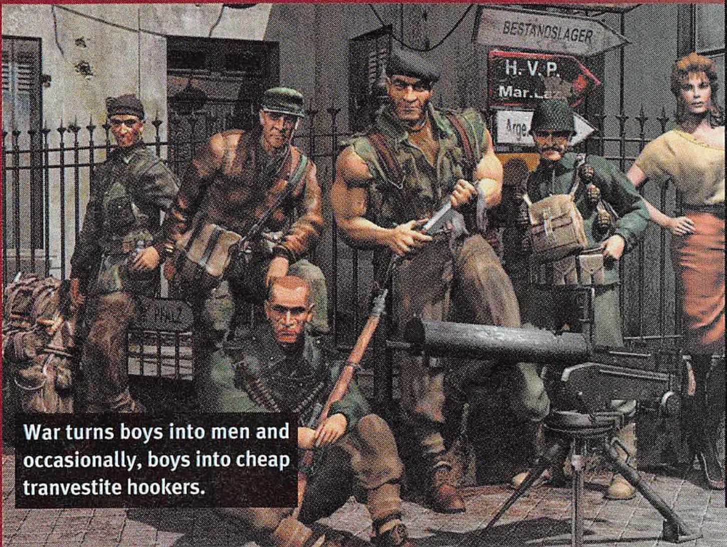
"How come I always have to go first?"



Puff Daddy renegotiating his contract.

commandos II

PUBLISHER Eidos **DEVELOPER** Pyros Studios



War turns boys into men and occasionally, boys into cheap tranvestite hookers.

Vampire's use of both a colon and a dash in its title is more punctuation than any game has a right to

ILLUSTRATION BY BRIAN KREZEL

In hindsight, this feature should probably be renamed to "If We Got Ran Out Of The Game Industry"

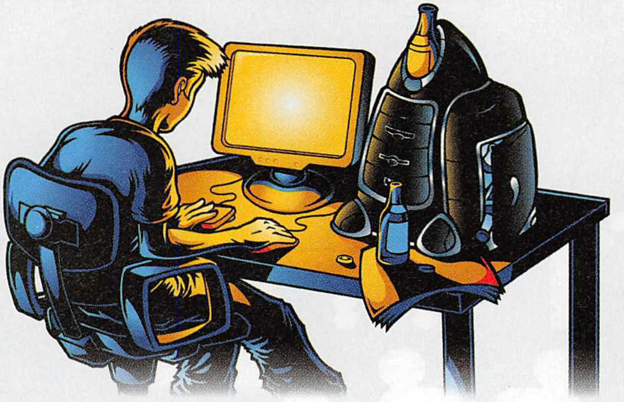
IF WE RAN THE GAME INDUSTRY

We've had enough. Had it up to here. We're fed up and just plain pissed off — enough to fling open our windows and shout "We're mad as hell and we're not going to take it anymore!" We'd jump out our office window to our doom, but **PCXL**'s second floor location would only result in a few scrapes and bruises and could unwittingly air out that smokey bacon and corn chip smell that we've grown to love so much.

Why are we upset? The current state of the game industry is, to put it indelicately, in the toilet. Since demographers first reported that PCs would be infiltrating every facet of society, the "casual gamer" (i.e., everyone from gun-toting rednecks to crust-cutting soccer moms) has been courted like a drunken sailor in a Thai brothel. Budgets boomed, quality faded, and franchises get snapped up faster than you can say "*Police Academy 6*." New games are marketed as being "like *Diablo* meets *StarCraft* meets *Wing Commander*" and beta patches sometimes get released before the actual game. Geez, even LucasArts can't make a decent Star Wars title anymore. Has the world gone mad?

What follows is an open letter to the industry. In our swan song, the **PCXL** staff ass-embled our last will and testament and we expect you to follow it ... or else. Some may live and Head Games may die, but the world would undoubtedly be a better place ... IF WE RAN THE GAME INDUSTRY.

If we really ran the game industry ⤳ *Daikatana* would've been canned instead of us ...



THINGS WE'D STOP ... NOW!

TIRED CLICHÉS

Name this game: It's set in a post-apocalyptic future where you, only you, can save humanity from an imminent threat by collecting keycards to get past security doors, experience odd weather effects like molten lava and slippery ice, and climb crates to reach new areas. Oh, that's right — it's every game released since 1993!

C'mon guys, surely you don't have to go all the way back to the original NES *Super Mario Brothers* to find game ideas. Some of the biggest offenders are TV and movie-based games. Here's a little hint — unless the characters spend a good chunk of their time running and pushing crates in the movies, then they shouldn't in the game, either. Likewise, they shouldn't spend a lot of time finding health packs, flipping switches, jumping higher than humanly possible (especially if a woman), or any number of other clichés incorporated into nearly every game these days. Oh, and here's a fact about dead people — they don't melt away after being shot like a snowball in hell. For once, we'd like to see the results of our handiwork stick around until the end of the level. Dammit, why do you think we bought a GeForce and 128MB of RAM in the first place?

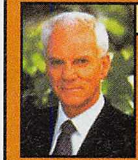
SOUTH PARK GAMES ⇢ A perfect example of "If you can't do something right, then don't do it at all." Making a license fit into an established genre isn't our first choice but if you do, make damn sure the core game is good to begin with.

LONG INTROS ⇢ We know you're proud of your company. We know the publisher, the developer, the graphics and sound card companies, the movie studio, and the distributor each want to get an opening credit on a game, but for the love of God, let us be able to skip past them! The first time is cool and gives us a movie-like oh-I-can't-wait anticipation. The tenth time it's just annoying. So cut it out already.

OUTLAWED CLICHÉS

SATAN

Id and Blizzard should be the only companies allowed to use his image – oh, and satanic cults as well



MALCOLM

Malcolm McDowell — Yes, he's English and sinister – so the hell is somebody else

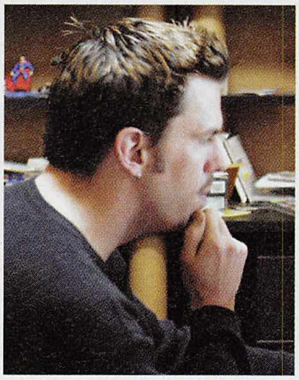
ENERGY BALLS

Energy Balls — What the hell are they? Nobody knows, but every game has them

Voiceover narration by English chicks

Mana — You heard us, no more frickin "spellcaster energy crap"

WHAT IF MIKE RAN THE INDUSTRY?



"Imagine this — you pay $49.95 for a game and get one life. One life and it's game over. That's it, you can't play the game again. Let's talk about consequences, changing the way you play, and adding some excitement to the game. No longer will players skip tutorials or run blindly around corners. And for those who actually finish the game, a true feeling of accomplishment. Of course, you can always buy a new life for a small fee of $9.95. Also, game magazine editor-in-chiefs should be revered, respected, and they should get laid ... a lot. Oh, and they should keep their jobs."

Mike Salmon
Editor-in-Chief

FRANCHISES THAT SHOULD BE DUMPED

Who doesn't remember X-ray specs? Some games have labels that serve the same purpose — we can see right through the box and view the hidden contents within. Star Trek, *Star Wars: Episode 1*, Dungeons and Dragons, and X-COM all jump to mind as franchises that we see and automatically cringe. Here are some others ...

MIGHT AND MAGIC ⇢ Here's a tip: When you make a sequel and it's not as good as the original, don't follow up with three more using the same engine.

TOMB RAIDER

This is less of a franchise than an experiment in marketing. How many times can you re-sell the same damn game?

LANDS OF LORE ⇢ The first one was good, but the miserable 2D/3D/voxel engines and bugs galore make us want to put the two sequels out of our misery, and out of our memory.

HUNTING GAMES ⇢ Sure, it's sold millions — but we bet it would sell exactly as much if it was just an empty box.

DESCENT ⇢ At first the idea of plunging into a deep and narrow hole for fun was appealing, but after the second sequel it's more like being sent to "the hole" in lockdown.

TEST DRIVE ⇢ It's like a chicken with its head cut off, except its head got chopped off a decade ago. Why doesn't it fucking die?

EXTREME SPORTS ⇢ Unless you're bungie jumping with a laptop, sports games played on the PC are, by definition, not extreme.

PCXL.COM READERS TALK BACK

"Story!!! What we need to do is get back to the days when games were all text-based, and only survived on the story alone. You put out a game like that with graphics on par with UT, then you've got my pretty penny."

Captain Craig

"Having a satisfaction guarantee. I've bought several games that weren't worth the CD they were burned on, and I couldn't return them. I can't do much other than complain to the makers, and even then, I don't get my money back! It's like throwing your money away! I have some pretty coasters tho! Standing behind the games is good way to increase the image of the company in the eyes of the paying public."

Vasken Balouzian

"Every PR person should look something like Stevie "Killcreek" Case. Every local EB should have both a free brothel and free pizza. Every magazine should be as funny as PCXL. Last but not least we should have a Quake tournament with President Clinton, Marilyn Manson, and the Hanson brothers."

Lynnie

"Stop using me as a beta tester. If I pay 40+ dollars to play a game, it should be finished! I have seen a recent trend of games being released and they are not even close to being finished. Then I have to send in the bug reports just to help get the patch released a little faster. Origin, are you listening?"

Grant Gaughf

"Make them more like Tribes. Take some Quake3, throw in flying, more violence, and a lot of hot women. That's all any gamer could want."

[PCXL]Fantius

"I would force companies to actually play test their games like Sid Meier and Blizzard do. I would have them release the game when it was done rather than when their stock-

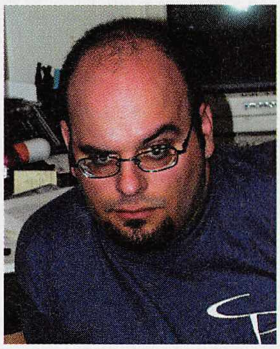
... game developers, publishers, and advertising reps would grow a sense of humor ...

anarchy online
To be presente at E3, May 2000

IF WE RAN THE GAME INDUSTRY

WHAT IF JASON RAN THE INDUSTRY?

"Massive games like *Diablo II* shouldn't be allowed to be late or they shouldn't let the public know when it will be released unless they are damn certain. Games of that magnitude can cause vaporware effects on the industry by continually telling consumers that the product will be out soon. It's bad for the PC market as a whole if people are not trying other games because next month the big game is going to come out, when in fact it's not coming out next month or the month after. Take notice Sierra and Valve ... keep *Half-Life 2* under wraps and don't tell us when it's coming out until it's really going to come out."



Jason Samuel
Executive Editor

CD-ONLY MANUALS → Look, we paid a lot of money for this game. The very least you can do is give us a paper manual to read while we're sitting on the pot. Make it short and simple — we're not looking for a novel, but at least give us something that we can hold in our hands. (Note to flight sim manufacturers: 500 pages is 490 pages more than we ever want to read about a game — especially a flight sim.) And while you're at it, put your CD in a jewel case. Paper sleeves are chintzy and don't fit in our CD racks.

BETA PATCHES → It's bad enough that you couldn't even finish the frickin' game before releasing it, but do us all a favor and finish the patch! If the version number looks like it would be at home in an Algebra equation, then you're doing something wrong.

RAPING OUR CHILDHOODS → Stop cheapening fond adolescent memories of dark, trashy arcades by updating old classics in "a rich 3D environment." They were great in 1981. Now they just suck.

SLIPPAGE → Games should meet their expected dates of release. If a deadline is broken, execute one programmer a week until the product ships. It may sound harsh, but offing the entire *Daikatana* development team would surely reinvigorate the industry. (Note: Blizzard is exempt.)

IF WE MADE KEYBOARDS

Screw the keyboard, this is the only FPS controller we need.

IF I RAN THE GAME INDUSTRY ... DAVE PERRY

I would make it a felony to make a sequel past number 2.

I would make it a felony to make a console that costs over $299.99

I would show team credits on game boxes, just like they do on movie videos.

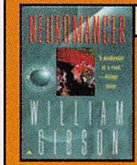
I would charge $9.99 for games.

I would make game developers celebrities that cause girls to scream with excitement when they walk into local supermarkets.

Dave Perry
Founder and President of Shiny Entertainment

FRANCHISES THAT WE WOULD LIKE TO SEE

Every time we see *Blade Runner* or rob the local liquor store, we think, "why isn't *this* a successful game franchise?" With such a wealth of source material, some themes need to be made, pronto!

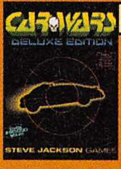


NEUROMANCER

William Gibson's cyberpunk world gives everyone virtual wood. We're talking Cyborg implants, high-tech weapons, and near-omnipotent Corporations in a rainy Megalopolis. Is that so hard?

MARVEL COMICS

The Punisher meets the *Quake III Arena* engine! GI Joe Real-time Strategy! Screw *EverQuest*, I want to join the Avengers, the X-men, or the Marauders



CAR WARS

The closest we got was *I-76*. Any game where you customize your car with a wide variety of deadly weapons and travel across a post-apocalyptic U.S.A. is a game we want to play

THE SOPRANOS

"The Sopranos" – As long as we don't see anything like *Soprano Rally* ("Fugeddaboudit!"), this would be the smart gamer's alternative to *Kingpin*. The level where Tony looks for Pussy in the Bada-Bing Club would be worth $49.95

BAT BOY

The Weekly World News provides some of the best weekly entertainment available anywhere. Bat Boy, the alien who advises Clinton, Ed Anger, Elvis, life-saving uses for garlic ... now, that's a world we'd like to see a game set in!

PCXL.COM READERS TALK BACK

holders say they need some cash. And I would make everyone subscribe to PC Accelerator!"
Mark Bishop

"I think the one thing that would make games better is universal hardware. It's a pipe dream that will never happen, but if developers knew that everyone had the latest processor and graphics card, they could spend much less time figuring out how to port their engine to DirectX and focus on the fun factor of their gameplay."
Jordan

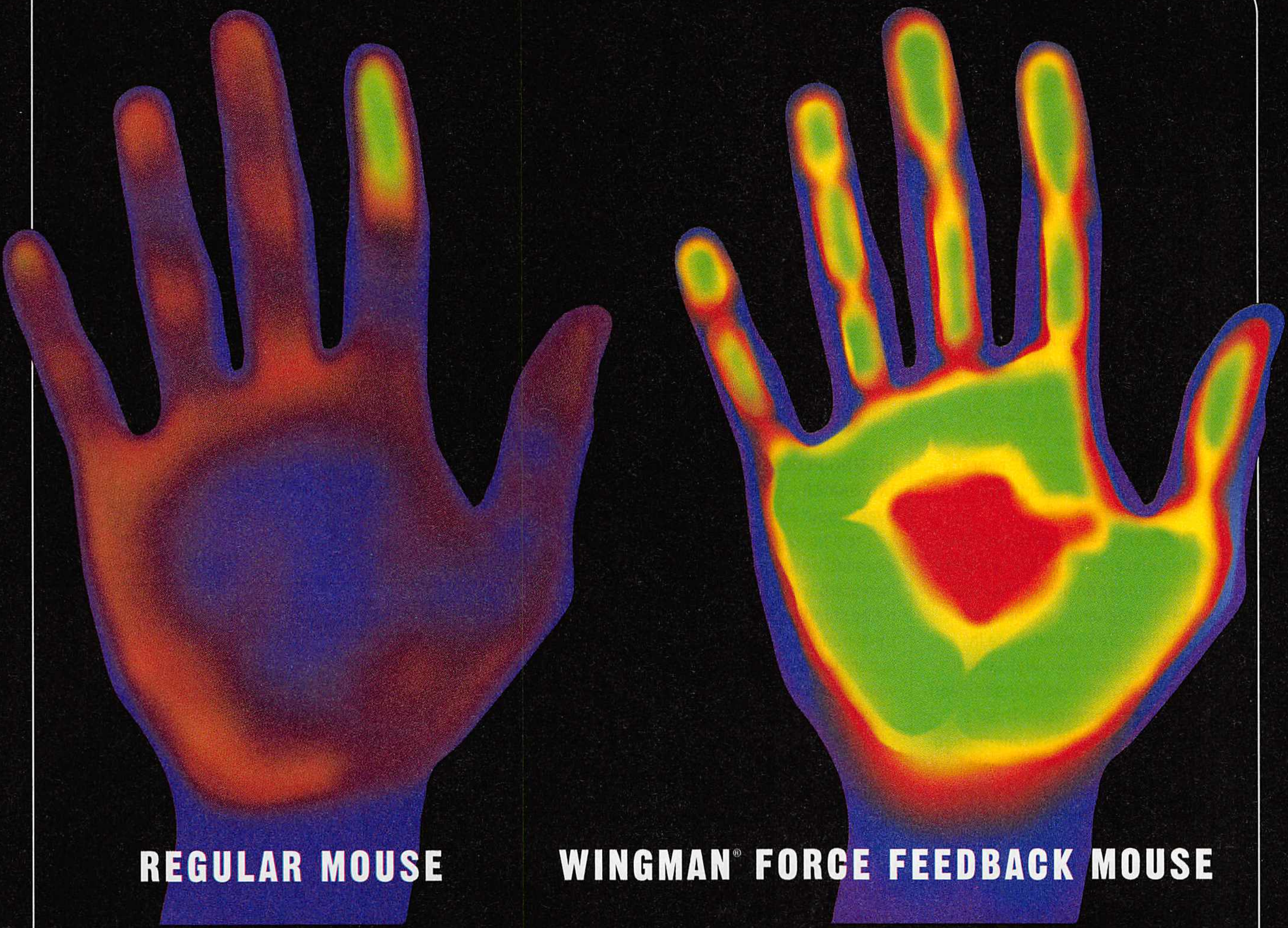
"[Movie directors] don't find the need to waste people's time by flashing commercials on the movie's progress. I imagine the following scenario with John Landis possibly updating his plan during Animal House filming: 'Today I filmed Donald Sutherland's man-ass. I filmed the shit out of that man-ass, taking at least 54 different angles of it. I hope the technology exists someday so that I may slow-mo rotate around that man-ass like a motherf—ker. I predict this technique will be highly overused in the future.'"
Diego Gallego

"The simple truth of the matter is that I purchase far fewer PC games when the marketing departments of gaming companies start promoting products too early. Marketing needs to come to a crescendo about two months prior to release, not two years."
Wubba Man

"If I could change only one thing in gaming, I would declare an end to fire-on-release weapons. It's unnatural and counter-intuitive, and about as much fun as having your gas and brake pedals switch roles every now and then."
Avenging Angler

"Bring back the paddle controllers from the Atari 2600 Cartridge Console! I have tried all the fancy wheels and none were

WingMan®



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0 20 40 60 80 100 Tgs.

Representation of super-ultrasensical nerve engagement in the localized metacarpal region (in tactograms).†

† This is gibberish, meant to illustrate the incredible features of the WingMan® Force Feedback Mouse. Super-ultrasensical isn't a word. Metacarpal is. It means hand. And tactograms? Again, not a word. But it sounds cool.

www.logitech.com/ffmouse

Introducing the WingMan® Force Feedback Mouse. The first and only mouse that lets you feel what you're playing while you're playing it.

Give your hand what it's been missing: an unbelievably realistic gaming experience like nothing you've ever felt.

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Immersion
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Go to **http://pcxl.ign.com/gaming411**: Product Number 172

THINGS WE'D CHANGE

SEPARATE RACKS FOR MASS MARKET GAMES ···➔ Segregation of the races is horrible and wrong. Segregation between hardcore gamers and stupid people is a dream come true. And if you think about it, it's a public service. Someone asking for a copy of *Frogger* might run into a little, shall we say, "accident" near the *Soldier Of Fortune* section.

CUTSCENES ···➔ Cinematics have their place, but if you're spending more money on actors than you are on programmers, then your priorities are skewed. Case in point, *Tiberian Sun*. Was James Earl Jones really worth the tradeoff of sluggish gameplay? There's plenty of cheap classically-trained nobodies in Hollywood who'd love to play a spunky, mutant sidekick — hire one of them (Note: You can find these actors waiting tables at all L.A.-area Denny's restaurants).

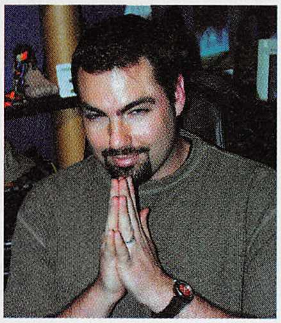
MORATORIUM ON NEW HARDWARE ···➔ Say what you will about the X-Box, but at least it'll give programmers a chance to finally get the most they can out of PC components. From now on, new generations of 3D cards and CPUs will be released only once a year. Let's make it so that all that T&L, texture-compressed, and motion-blurred goodness actually gets used sometime in the product's lifetime before a whole new line of confusing acronyms pop up.

RELYING ON LICENSES ···➔ A T.V. show, movie, or celebrity is like fine porn — it should compliment the date, not BE the date. The Star Trek folks are finally starting to figure this out. But Star Wars? Well ... ahem ... *cough*... better luck with *Obi-Wan*, we guess.

HITTING PEDESTRIANS IN DRIVING GAMES ···➔ "Waah, don't run over people on the sidewalk — you're a good guy!" If God hadn't intended us to bash our bumpers into Starbuck-suckers, they wouldn't be standing there. Stop making them jump out of the way at the last minute and give us gamers what we want.

COOL PC'S ···➔ It's about time we had a color choice other than creamy beige. If our PC's looked cool, then maybe gamers would look cool using them. And let's tailor to users' individual needs — beer holders, tissue dispensers, squeezably soft fake breasts, and a soft eject mirror for a quick bump ... all of these things could be built onto a PC.

WHAT IF CHUCK RAN THE INDUSTRY?



"I'd outlaw long, drawn-out cinematic cutscenes of shuttles flying around motherships. I'd make a good game ... *for the PC* ... based on DC comics . Capcom would give *Street Fighter* a rest. More games would include pants. And, PR reps would recognize me, know my name, and stop asking me what I do, uh, *did* at **PCXL**."

Chuck Osborn
Unloved Associate Editor

IF WE MADE A COOL MOUSE

A mouse made specifically for a guy's big meaty paw. Can also be used to cold-cock someone in a street fight.

IF I RAN THE GAME INDUSTRY ...

"I'd be interested in three areas right now: Playstation2 — developing games that are more mature and unique than the console games that have been done for so long. Internet entertainment — from multiplayer worlds to Hollywood-style cyber fiction. Finally, virtual reality — which is what I think will be the 'next big thing' after realtime 3D."

JANE JENSEN
Creator/writer of the Gabriel Knight series

PCXL.COM READERS TALK BACK

better than this simple idea from the 70's which fits in the palm of your hand."

W. Jones

"More sniping, it should only take one pop in the head to kill off your enemy when he doesn't even expect it. Of course the best part being that he doesn't even have a chance to fire back..."

Casey Thomas

"Make games that get me laid more!"

Wick

"There's only one thing wrong with gaming. It needs to involve me more. Plain and simple—you want to take gaming to the next level, you put me in the middle of it. No, really. I'm serious. Really."

David Kirby

"I want to kick 3dfx in the ass. Only sneaky bastards release a trumped-up version of an old product when they have the ability to sell one with better features and functionality for the same price."

MacTruck

"More realistic, more personal, more physical games that get me involved bodily."

FLaps

"Take control of the industry away from the bean-counters, lawyers and investors, and put it BACK where it belongs: GAME PLAYERS, DEVELOPERS and DESIGNERS! If a game has bugs, don't let it leave the developer's hands. If a game doesn't offer anything in the way of gameplay, don't even let it out of the design phase. Don't release a game until it is READY, NOT when some proverbial Ebeneezer Scrooge wants a quick buck."

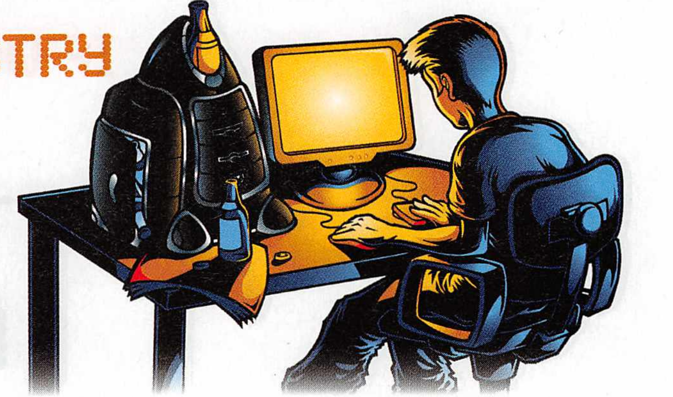
David Wyatt

"CUT THE PRICE, CUT THE CRAP, AND CUT THE CLOTHES."

Buggy

"... actually have game developers make something that they would want to play themselves."

Matt Henson



(CLIP AND SAVE!)

PCXL'S NEW 11 COMMANDMENTS

THOU SHALT SCREW GERMANY ···> Deutchland doesn't want bloody games. The question is: Why are game developers pandering to the sissified whinings of a country responsible for most of the bloodshed in the 20th century? Damn Krouts should be thankful we send 'em games at all.

THOU SHALT DESTROY THE ENVIRONMENT ···> Anything and everything in a game environment should be blow-uppable. Wooden doors get shredded by shotgun blasts and rocks are disintegrated by nukes. If you haven't done these things, then you're a colossal failure and we're sleeping with your wife.

THOU SHALT TELL THE TRUTH ···> If the current "minimum requirements" standard on game boxes were used by the FDA, schoolchildren across the nation would die from malnutrition. "Minimum" should mean what you must have to make the game play reasonably, not stammering like Porky Pig reading the Karma Sutra.

THOU SHALT PROGRAM THY NPCS WELL ···> It's the AI, stupid. Enemies should hear you, remember where you are, retreat if they get hurt, and have a sense of purpose. Fighting wave after wave of dumb, line-of-sight activated drones rushing you isn't fun. Frankly, if we've just blown away 26 levels of bad guys, we'd think a thug on level 27 might be just a *little* intimidated.

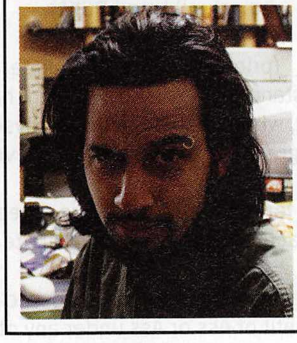
THOU SHALT NOT BE A SLIMY, MONEY-GRUBBING BITCH ···> If you're going to use a quote to promote your game, use the *whole* quote. If you've got the audacity to compare your game to *Diablo* or *Half-Life*, then don't get upset when we do the same, but negatively. And, finally, don't publicize a game until six months before its release date ... it's REAL release date you morons!

THOU SHALT ENTER THE 21st CENTURY ···> Just when we thought disk-swapping was a thing of the past, along comes multi-CD games like *Baldur's Gate*. We have DVD technology, so let's use it! Gamers: If you don't have a DVD ROM drive, get one.

THOU SHALT AUTO-UPDATE ···> By law, every new game will download and install new patches by itself. That flashy, graphic-intensive Java applet you've got as an intro to your web page? We don't care! Just get it done without making us remember which drive we just installed your game on.

THOU SHALT KEEP CONTROLS SIMPLE ···> You shouldn't have to use more keys than you have fingers. (For most of us, that would be ten.) Any more than that is a steep learning curve and a waste of our time. Also, make W-A-S-D the default configuration. If we wanted to use the arrow keys, we'd be southpaw freaks.

WHAT IF MATT RAN THE INDUSTRY?



"The next buck-toothed pencil neck that puts my ass in a maze is going to get his face punched into the back of his head. The last time mazes were fun was when I was five and got lost at the supermarket. If you are too damn stupid to make the game fun, just make the game shorter — don't put in a freaking maze!"

Matt Holmes

Bald, lipstick-wearing Ass. Editor

THOU SHALT NOT CALL A GAME A SEQUEL UNLESS IT REALLY IS ···> A new move, unit, or snowmobile does not a game sequel make. And if you're still using the same engine from the original, it's an add-on pack.

THOU SHALT LISTEN ···> Ignore fans at your peril. If the game was released buggy, then fix it. Don't assume that high sales equals satisfaction. Gamers DO remember. (Just ask poor *Ultima* fans.)

And finally ...

THOU SHALT NOT CANCEL CRAZY, IRREVERENT PC GAME MAGS ···> Unlike the south, **PCXL** will rise again. As long as fans demand game journalism that's not the same ol' drab press release-style previews, dry reviews, and humdrum analysis of the graphical difference between voxels and gigapixels, we won't have died in vain. Support creativity!

THE TRUTH IN SEQUELING ACT

Since the entire industry seems hell-bent on making sequels, we decided there needs to be a governing body, and in true democratic fashion we have elected ourselves to be that body. Any game that does not follow these simple guidelines will be classified as an add-on pack and sold for $9.

Must continue same story (but can't BE the same story)

Must use a new engine or substantially improved version of original

Subtitles shall be kept to a maximum of three words

Sequels can go no higher than #3

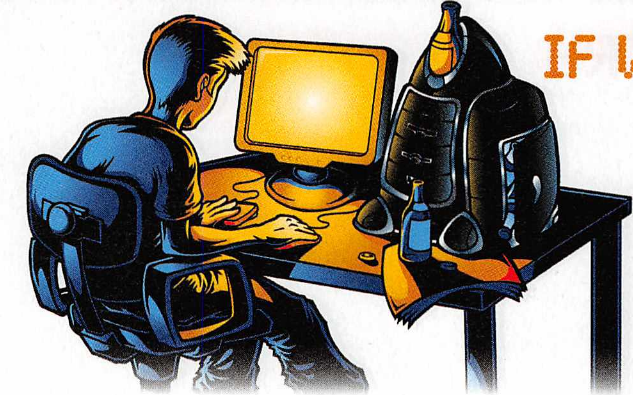
Prequels are forever banned (this is the *Episode 1: Phantom Menace* Amendment)

Sports games are exempt from rules 1-5

IF WE MADE PCS

We give you the Guy's PC! Muscle-car design with a handy beer fridge and bottle holder

... the booth babes in Kentia Hall at E3 would all be under the age of sixty ...



THE PCXL/GAME MAKER AGREEMENT

This Agreement is made between the undersigned ("Game Maker") and *PC Accelerator* ("Kick-Ass Magazine") to ensure the manufacture of high quality video game entertainment to the satisfaction of *PC Accelerator* on behalf of the game-playing community (or at least the smart ones who actually read **PCXL**).

I, ______________________(print last name, first name, MI), do hereby vow to uphold the following rules, in spirit and deed, of this Agreement or understand that I will be ridiculed, harrassed, harangued, vilified, and generally made fun of in the pages of PC Accelerator magazine, without complaint from myself or my agents ("Media Whores") in acknowledgement that failure to meet the terms of this Agreement means that I am a very, very, very, very bad person and need to be spanked.

1. **The Tenets Of Ass.** Ass ("Ass"), for the purposes of this Agreement, includes, but is not limited to, the act of being Ass, to Ass-ify, to Ass-en, to Ass-itate, or actively engage or participate in any behavior which enh-asses or results in Ass by-products.

a. From this day forward, the undersigned agrees to only participate in the manufacture of excellent games, to the satisfaction of *PC Accelerator*, without the benefit of Ass or Ass under any other name (Crap, Shit, Doody, etc).

b. The undersigned agrees to actively dissuade others from engaging in Acts of Ass, and will accept no Ass from subordinates.

c. If the undersigned discovers that any project with his/her involvement contains a level of Ass equal to or higher than the level of non-Ass, the undersigned agrees to decrease the Ass to an acceptable level, if possible, or leave the project, if possible.

d. If a game that is absolutely, undeniably, and quantifiably Ass should be made, through no fault of the undersigned, by the undersigned and/or the undersigned's associates, the Ass game shall be sold only in the State of Arkansas and/or the country of France, where works of Ass are not only appreciated, but encouraged (see Jerry Lewis).

e. All new projects, including, but not limited to sequels, add-on packs, licensed games based upon a film, TV, character, or person (living or dead) or wholly original ideas, shall be monitored for Inherent Assitude. If the undersigned or *PC Accelerator* finds the Inherent Assitude to be high, it is the undersigned's duty to end the project immediately or die trying.

The undersigned must never, ever, ever do any of the following:

Release a game before its time
Release a game WAY after its time
Release a game with the word "Extreme" in the title
Release a game that purposely aims to dupe ignorant "mass market" consumers of their hard-earned cash
Release screenshots to any magazine or website BEFORE releasing them to *PC Accelerator*
Use b-list Hollywood talent (and we use that word lightly) in any game
This list includes (but is not limited too) the following: Corey Haim, Corey Feldman, Freddie Prinze Jr., Christopher Walken, Darva the Millionaire Divorcee, Kathy Griffin, Christopher Reeve (not even in a wheelchair simulator), Dennis Hopper, Leonardo Di-Crap-prio, and any actor with the last name Baldwin (we're just not sure which one's are actually brothers — but all of them are illegal)
Step on Superman's cape
Spit into the wind
Take the mask off the old lone ranger
Mess around with Jim

The party signed below agrees to execute this Agreement as of the day and year set forth below.

Game Maker: Company:

______________________________ ______________________________ Date: ____________________
[signature] [print]

Congratulations! You are now an official **PCXL** Ass Avenger. Please clip and send this contract to:
"I Am An Ass Avenger"; c/o **PCXL**; 150 North Hill Drive; Brisbane, CA 94005

... and this document would be legally binding, but it's a moot point since **PCXL** is now defunct

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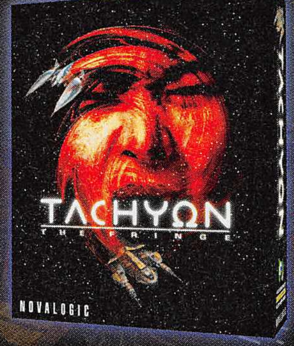
ACTUAL SCREENSHOTS

FULL IN-GAME CINEMATIC ENGINE WITH THE VOICE OF

BRUCE CAMPBELL

(*EVIL DEAD, XENA*) AS YOUR CHARACTER JAKE LOGAN



Supported but not required:
Direct 3D™, 3dfx™ & Force Feedback

EVERYONE
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IN STORES SPRING 2000
Download the Demo Today at www.novalogic.com

NovaWorld
www.novaworld.com

Go to **http://pcxl.ign.com/gaming411**: Product Number 37

ALIENWARE

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AREA 51

Intel Pentium III 866 Processor SSE
High-Performance Heatsink/Cooling Fan
Intel 820 Chipset Motherboard w/5PCI Slots
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Floppy Drive 1.44MB
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Altec Lansing ACS54 Gaming
5-Piece Subwoofer/Speaker System
Pioneer 16X/40X DVD Player
HP 9300i CDR-W 8x/4x/32x CD Writer
ATX Mid-Tower Case w/300 Watt PS
104-Enhanced Keyboard PS/2
Microsoft Intellimouse Explorer
US Robotics V.90 56K Voice/Fax/Modem
Microsoft Sidewinder Precision Pro
Microsoft Sidewinder Gamepad
Microsoft Windows '98 SE OS
Free installation & configuration of
favorite games & optimal drivers

PRICE: $3,499.00
Financing starting at: $84.00/Mo.,60 Mos

AREA 51 AURORA

AMD Athlon 1000MHz Processor w/3DNOW!
High-Performance Heatsink/Cooling Fan
KX133 Chipset Motherboard w/5PCI Slots
256MB SDRAM (PC-133)
Black Floppy Drive 1.44MB
Maxtor DiamondMax PLUS 40GB 7200RPM HD
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400-Watt Subwoofer/Speaker System
Pioneer 16X/40X DVD Player
HP 9300i CDR-W 8x/4x/32x CD Writer
Black ATX Mid-Tower Case w/300 Watt PS
Black 107-Enhanced Keyboard PS/2
Microsoft Intellimouse Explorer
US Robotics V.90 56K Voice/Fax/Modem
Microsoft Sidewinder Precision Pro
Microsoft Sidewinder Gamepad
Microsoft Windows '98 SE OS
Free installation & configuration of
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PRICE: $3,599.00
Financing starting at: $86.00/Mo.,60 Mos

MONITORS

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19" Viewsonic E790B .26dp add:	$395.00
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19" Viewsonic PS790 .26dp add:	$525.00
21" Viewsonic P810 .26dp add:	$825.00
21" Viewsonic P815 .26dp add:	$875.00

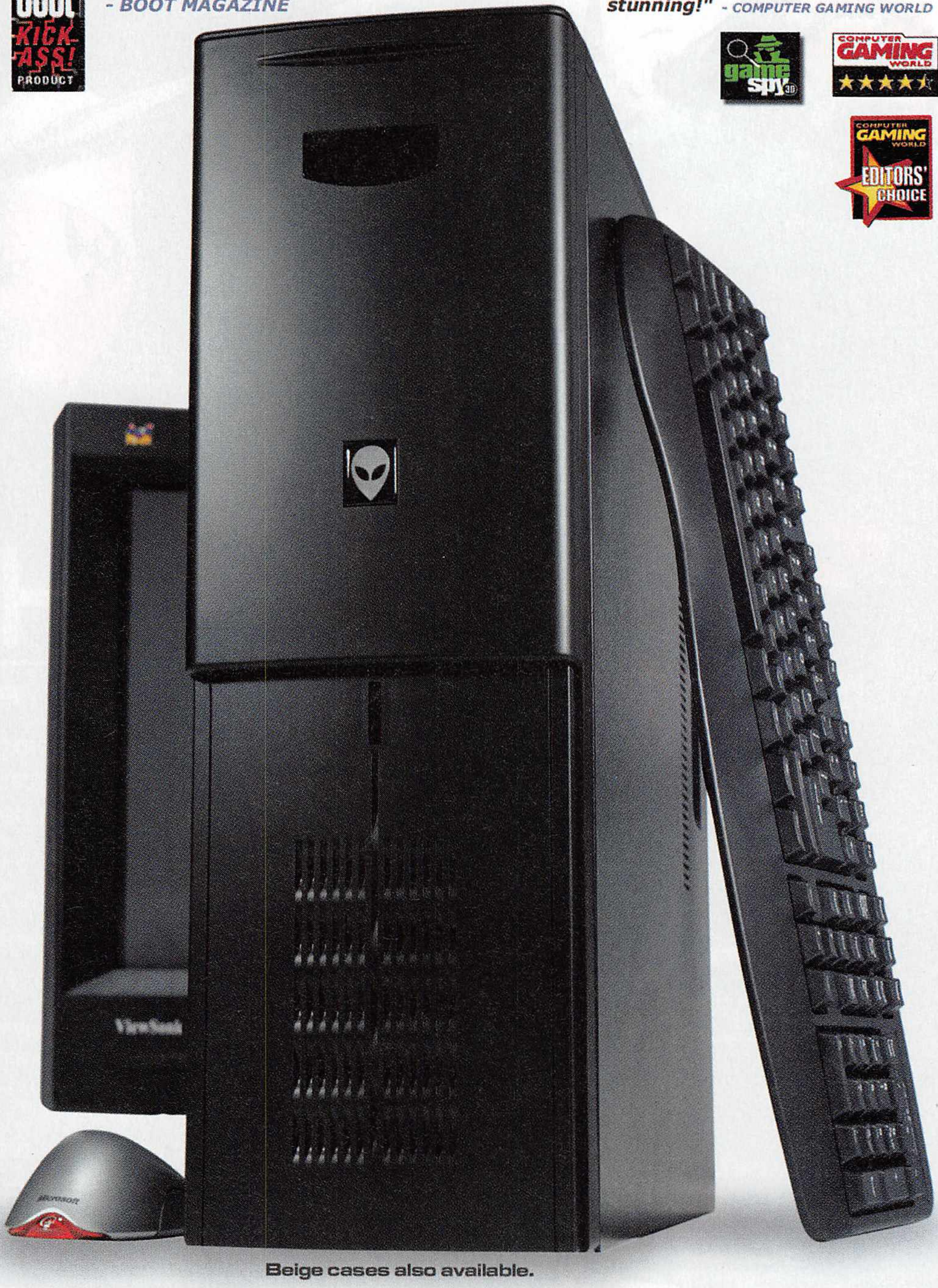
ALIENWARE

"With its newest Area51 system, Alienware once again proves that it builds the game machines that dreams are made of" - PC GAMER

"The fastest PC we've ever seen, bar none!" - MAXIMUM PC

"FAST, PACKED, & STACKED" - BOOT MAGAZINE

"Performance was simply stunning!" - COMPUTER GAMING WORLD



Beige cases also available.

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www.alienware.com

ONE MORE FOR THE ROAD ...

As The Disc Burns

Wild, woolly, and plain weird tech news

Hardware news doesn't normally sound like a soap opera, but we couldn't make this shit up if we tried. Here's the latest from this year's Game Developer's Conference and beyond.

Butterflies come alive on the X-Box. PCXL will be dead, though.

BILLAPALOOZA

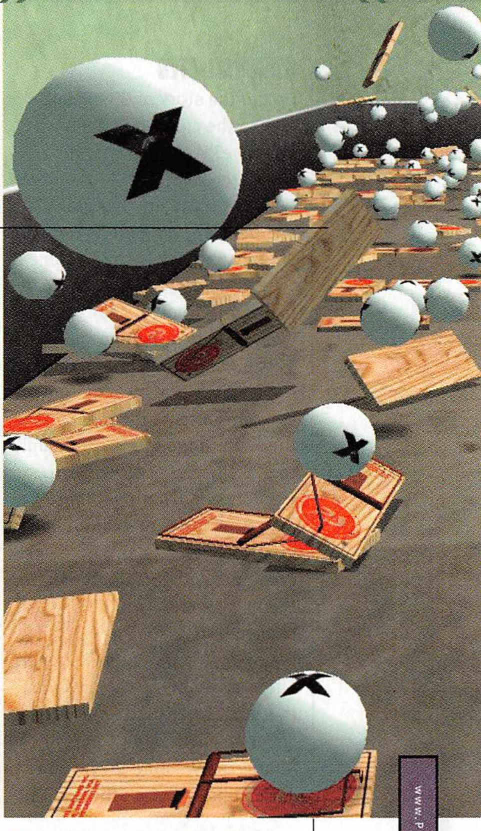
From the mob of scruffy t-shirted nerdlings waiting outside the auditorium, you'd have thought RATT was headlining the Game Developers Conference this year, but, as expected, Bill Gates delivered his keynote speech/infomercial announcing Microsoft's contribution to the console wars, the X-Box. What people didn't expect to hear was who would be putting the "X" in the X-Box.

While people-in-the-know had long suspected that AMD and GigaPixel would be contributing the CPU and 3D technologies respectively, Intel and NVIDIA made the cut at the last minute. (And we do mean last minute ... GigaPixel, after devoting the last six months to the project, found out they were dumped four days before the official announcement. AMD was reportedly told the night before.) The X-Box, said to be "competitively priced" (probably $299 or even free, if they offer a rebate á la Sega's new Dreamcast deal) looked mighty impressive, and with an estimated 1,000,000,000,000 operations per second under its belt it certainly oughta be.

Still, we can't help but feel that the recent monopoly ruling against Microsoft and resulting stock plummet is a total karma meltdown. But, with a full 18 months before the X-Box's release, a lot can happen, including, as one anonymous source close to the action speculated, another change in technology partners if better technology presents itself. The next year and a half should be very interesting indeed.

DIRECTX COMES OF AGE

The not-quite-as-big GDC news from Microsoft centered on its upcoming DirectX 8, set to ship late this summer. DX8 will offer major audio and networking advancements, featuring a new, improved DirectMusic API that'll allow developers the opportunity to make music a more integral part of games. A beefier DirectPlay also promises to incorporate realtime voice technology for in-game chats, as well as offer a new scalable architecture to better work with massively multiplayer Internet games. We expect to see a competing API, InDirectViolation, from evil adversary RenoSoft any day now.



Yet another spectacular demonstration of the X-Box's power.

X-BOX STATS

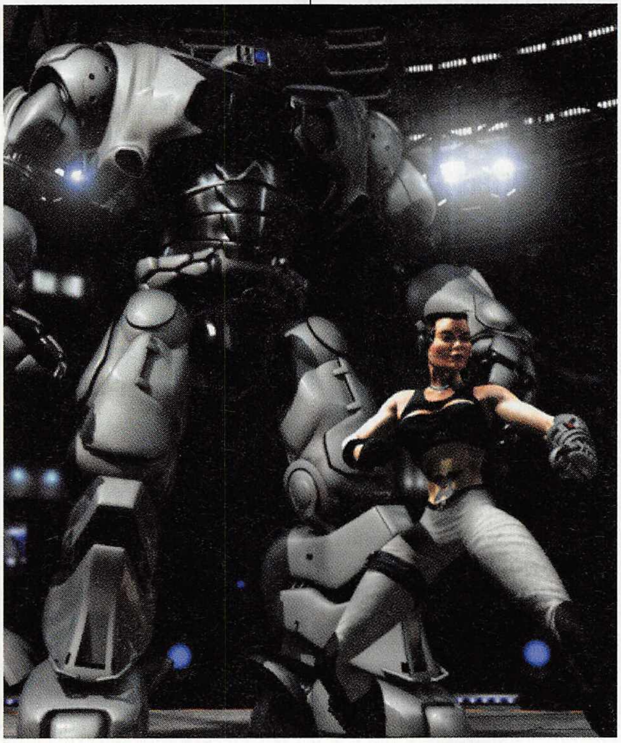
RELEASE DATE: Fall 2001 (probably September)
CPU: Intel Pentium III w/ streaming SIMD extensions
OPERATING SYSTEM: Windows 2000 kernel
GRAPHICS PROCESSOR: 300Mhz NVIDIA chip
STORAGE: 4X DVD, 8Gb Hard Drive, 8Mb Memory card
TOTAL MEMORY: 64Mb
MEMORY BANDWITH: 6.4Gb/sec
POLYGON PERFORMANCE: 300 M/sec
PIXEL FILL RATE: 4.8 G/Sec (anti-aliased)
COMPRESSED TEXTURES: Yes
FULL SCENE ANTI-ALIAS: Yes
DVD MOVIE PLAYBACK: Yes
3D AUDIO: Yes
MODEM: Optional (but broadband-enabled)
MAXIMUM RESOLUTION: 1920x1080
HDTV SUPPORT: Yes

PLUSES:

A "snapshot" of a perfectly working PC The first console with a hard drive ... finally!

MINUSES:

Yet another step towards Microsoft's world domination



X-Box – So real she could file sex harrassment charges against us.

POWER LIST

Here's this month's ultimate (and last) buy or die list. If you don't have it, get it. Got it? Good.

GET:

- AMD Athlon 1000 (if you can find or afford one)
- GeForce 256 DDR 3D card (now with anti-aliasing!)
- Microsoft Intellimouse Explorer (no other mouse shall be in my house)
- SoundBlaster Live! Platinum (Aureal's future looks a bit shaky)
- Microsoft Sidewinder Gamepad (there can be only one)
- Onstream 30GB digital drive (no sirree, Mr. FBI agent, there's no smut on my hard drive)
- Interactive Seating's Battle Chair (see our review this issue)
- Microsoft Internet Keyboard Pro (the "pro" means it's extra special)
- Animal Instincts 2: The Seductress on DVD (mmm, smell that? It's B-movie freshness)
- **PCXL**'s free coaster ... err ... demo disc

AVOID:

- Non-ironclad contracts with Microsoft
- Creating a funny, irreverent PC mag for guys who love games unless you're a glutton for punishment
- Punching Tony Soprano's sister in the mouth
- Hormel's new Battle Spam
- Coming between us and a bartender at E3

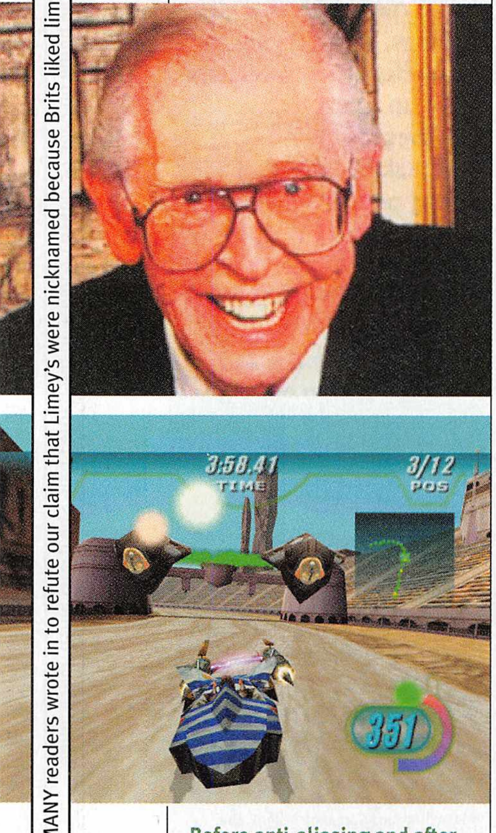
The hottie on page 65 doesn't come with the Battle Chair. She'll cost much, much more

GIGAPIXEL-ATED

So did the story of GigaPixel's kick to the curb bring a tear to your eye? Well, don't cry for GigaPixel ... yet. While "the little graphics company that didn't" has been showing off its Giga3D core technology for quite some time, it has yet to show up in any boards. That might change, however, with the announcement that 3dfx has snatched GigaPixel's ass up in a bear trap by acquiring the company a scant few weeks after the X-Box announcement, mainly to make use of GigaPixel's low memory bandwidth approach to rendering full-screen anti-aliased graphics. In hindsight, GigaPixel President and CEO George Haber thinks Microsoft wouldn't have chosen NVIDIA for the X-Box if the merger had occurred sooner. There's a made-for-TV movie in this somewhere ... that is if geeks watched anything on TV besides "Buffy The Vampire Slayer" and "Star Trek" — which they don't.

3DFX GOT GAME

Speaking of 3dfx, they finally had functional Voodoo5 boards at GDC, displaying for the entire world their anti-aliased splendor. If you haven't seen anti-aliasing in action yet, it's a beautiful thing. It cleans up the jaggies and stair-stepping in 3D graphics, leaving only creamy smooth objects. Considering 3dfx's huge revenue losses recently (not to mention buying GigaPixel for around $186 million), they must also be hoping the Voodoo5 cleans up in sales when it's released this May. We'd give you the lowdown next issue, but we won't be here next issue.



Before anti-aliasing and after. Wow, what a difference!

NVIDIA FOREVER

Speaking of anti-aliasing, NVIDIA's newest "leaked" Detonator beta reference drivers (version 5.14 at the time of this writing) for TNT and GeForce 256 boards offer full-screen anti-aliasing. It's good to see a company adding features to an existing product, instead of advertising features that are only implemented months after release (T&L support in S3/Diamond's Viper II, for example.) With the X-Box announcement, NVIDIA has become the 700-pound gorilla of the graphics industry. The quick glimpse we got of their next generation chip does nothing to change that opinion, either.

S3 STRIKES ... AND THEY'RE OUT

Speaking of S3 (déjà vu), they recently announced that they've sold off their graphics business to VIA, deciding to shift focus to their RIO and HomeFree brands and undetermined "Internet appliances". S3 didn't say it's leaving the graphics board business altogether, but you probably shouldn't expect a Viper III anytime soon.

MATROX MATTERS

Not much new here, but Matrox has announced their new G450 graphics board for business users (based on their G400 chipset but with DDR memory and flat panel support). The big news is that they are busily working on a new gamer's 3D card set for release late this year.

AUREAL SHAME

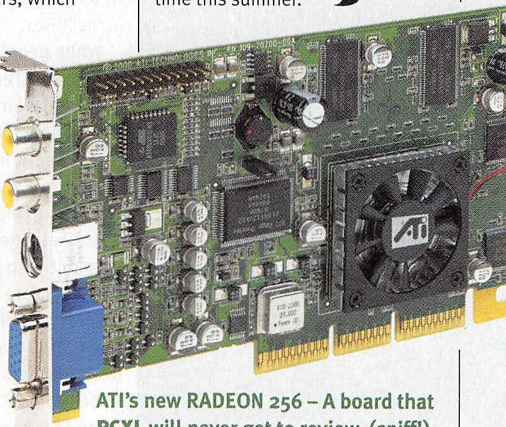
Makers of the Vortex2 soundcard and A3D technology, Aureal shocked everyone by announcing the abrupt resignations of ALL its executive officers and senior staff members, but not saying why. Of course, it could have something to do with Aureal's $26.9 million in losses for 1999 or the costly, but eventually successful, patent litigation with Creative. Aureal's board of directors states that it "is seeking replacement or turnaround management and is considering all necessary actions to either sell the company or its assets or wind down the company," and recently filed Chapter 11 bankruptcy. Could these resignations be a hint that Aureal's days are numbered?

CREATIVE'S BIG TOOL

... and who would happier to see them go than their chief competitor, Creative? To end this news round-up on a happy note, we'll tell you that Creative showed us their new EAGLE 3D audio modeling tool for developers, which should make programming complicated sound effects much easier in future EAX-supported games. Unfortunately, our raging hangover kept us from fully appreciating the ear-shattering demo, but let's just say that it was very ... loud.

ATI'S NEW CHIP

Hey, ATI, you've just acquired ArtX, the company providing graphics technology for Nintendo's Project Dolphin, for $400 million. So, what do you do now? Create the RADEON 256 ™ chipset, of course. Incorporating ATI's new buzzword-alicious Charisma Engine and Pixel Tapestry Architecture, it'll bring you Transform, Clipping and Lighting (TCL) hardware support, three-way multitexturing, Advanced Vertex Skinning (to make characters bend and move naturally), Keyframe Interpolation (character morphing), and even — tah-daah! — full screen anti-aliasing. Look for the as-yet-unnamed boards sometime this summer.

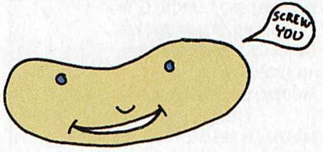


ATI's new RADEON 256 – A board that PCXL will never get to review. (sniff!)

NOSTRO- LIMEY PREDICTS

LIMEY THE WISECRACKIN' LIMA BEAN SAYS: "HEY SLACKERS, SHUT YER YAP AND LISSEN UP! WANNA KNOW WHO'S GONNA BE WHISTLIN' YOUR SKINFLUTE NEXT YEAR? CAN'T TELL YA, YUTZ, BUT GEEK NEWS, I'M ALL OVER. HERE'S WHAT'S GONNA HAPPEN BY THE END OF THE YEAR ..."

- Matrox buys S3's graphic business. 3dfx buys Matrox. ATI buys 3dfx. NVIDIA buys ATI. Microsoft buys NVIDIA. Microsoft creates a 3D card monopoly and screws you, sucker!
- Aureal hires Louis Pearlman, ex-business manager for Backstreet Boys and 'N Sync, to replace the executive staff with a group of good-looking, mildly-skilled flesh mannequins. The Vortex3 will become the best-selling sound card of all time, but only because teenage girls want to suck face with Aureal's new CEO.
- X-Box Plus! software that adds "enhanced features" to the coming console will go on sale a full year before the X-Box hits shelves. Since the Japanese won't be getting their mitts on a console early for once, early adapters who would normally buy imported consoles will snatch it up with gleeful abandon.
- ATI announces their new Pixie Tapster Architecture, which will render all 3D graphics with tiny magical bartenders who'll serve free drinks to anybody using it. Unfortunately, once NVIDIA buys ATI, the technology is lost forever. Until next time, screw all of you!



MANY readers wrote in to refute our claim that Limey's were nicknamed because Brits liked lima beans ...

Interactive Seating Battle Chair

PRICE → $249 (chair only)
$439 (fully decked out)
WEBSITE → www.battlechair.com
BUNDLE → None

In the world of gaming chairs, Interactive Seating (formerly known as Hunsaker) is in a class almost by itself. With its chief rival in booty-shaking audio chairs being Imeron (of the lackluster Intensor series), Interactive Seating's Battle Chair is the top-of-the-line luxury item for hardcore gamers. And, make no mistake, this is a luxury — to get a fully loaded chair with Digital Signal Processor, arm rests, padded seat cover, and Action Tray (so wimps won't drop their joysticks on the floor), expect to pay $439, not including shipping. (The chair by itself is $249 — it's just the chair and speakers, no amplifier or fancy cushion included.) Still, considering that 3dfx plans on releasing one of their upcoming Voodoo5 boards for $600 bucks, spending half a grand on a peripheral that doubles as office furniture doesn't sound too unreasonable.

The Battle Chair is a bulky behemoth with dual shoulder-height 5.25" speakers and an 8" woofer at the base of your back. In this case, feeling sound is almost as important as hearing it. If you turn up the bass, each firing of a rocket in Quake III sends vibrating tingles of nirvana to your posterior, simultaneously giving you tiny quickie massages. Audio quality, especially when listening to music, won't match a standard surround sound setup, but that isn't really the point of having one of these babies. This isn't just a PC peripheral — you can use it with any console system, TV, DVD player, or stereo. (Experiencing gun battles from The Matrix with the Battle Chair gives a new meaning to the word "immersive.") Just make sure you buy your girlfriend/roommate a pair of earplugs, cause this sucker is best utilized loud.

It's not without its problems, though. To thoroughly test the Battle Chair, we used it everyday for a solid month. (If you buy one, pop for the padded cover — you and your ass will be glad you did.) While the chair is designed to accommodate anyone 250 lbs or under (which we are — barely in some cases), an armrest knob broke off less than a week into our testing. And since a big thick wire plugs into the base of the chair, it was way too easy to wrap the wire around the legs, run over it, and create gaping holes in the insulation. The Battle Chair's not that comfortable over long periods of time, but at least it isn't a ball-breaker like the Intensor LX 350. So pamper yourself, but remember — too much of a good thing can make your butt sore.

+ PLUSES

- + The best audio immersion chair on the market
- + Free back massages

— MINUSES

- – Expensive for a peripheral
- – Questionable durability

RATING 7

Maxi Sound Fortissimo

PRICE → $49.95
WEBSITE → www.guillemot.com
BUNDLE → Acid DJ music software, assorted MIDI/audio applications

When faced with the decision of laying out wads of cash for a hot, new 3D graphics card or a hot, new 3D sound card, most gamers would rather have nice graphics. Great sound is a luxury for the budget conscious gamer, even with the incredible advancements in 3D audio over the past couple of years from Creative and Aureal. Enter Guillemot and their new Maxi Sound Fortissimo — big on quality and low on price. You don't have an excuse now, do ya cheapskate?

Powered by the Yamaha YMF744 chip and Sensaura 3D Positional Audio, the Fortissimo supports both EAX 1.0 (like Creative's Soundblaster Live!) and A3D 1.0 (like Aureal's Vortex series), as well as DirectSound3D. The good news is that it recognizes all the major sound APIs, but the bad news is that a lot of new games only recognize newer versions of EAX and A3D. (EAX 2.0 support was just added in a recent driver update, however.) However, even if you default back to DirectSound3D, Sensaura's surround sound solution (using "transaural crosstalk cancellation algorithms" — Damn, we knew we should've stayed awake during calculus!) does a credible job of bringin' in da noize/bringin' in da funk. The PCI-only board supports both two-speaker and four-speaker setups, and also has a digital optical connection and, of course, a standard game port.

The only quibbles we had with the Fortissimo involved installation. The instruction manual is pretty damn skimpy, and the pictures used to demonstrate how to install the board are tiny and seem to have been shot from a distance. Since the CD In slot isn't clearly marked like it is on other boards, and the accompanying pictures don't give any clues, hardware neophytes might play a little "pin the CD connector on the 3D card" before they finally get it right. Nobody would ever want to trade in their Vortex 2 or Live! Card for a Fortissimo, but it's an excellent choice for cash-strapped gamers looking to upgrade their likely crappy factory sound board.

+ PLUSES

- + Only $49.99! (Probably less on "the street")
- + Supports all major 3D sound APIs

— MINUSES

- – Supports only older versions of EAX and A3D

RATING 7

... Turns out "Limey" has something to do with lime in thier soil. Whatever, people, get a life!

The last guy who asked
"Are they real?" is dead.

Actually, every guy she's met is dead.

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Summer Luvin'

"Summer luvin,' had me a blast ..."

If the small bit of sunlight finding its way through your blinds seems more persistent, it's because summer's here! You remember summer — the time of year when girls walk the streets half-dressed, children run amok in the grocery store aisles, and zany frat guys go on wacky adventures to get their nerdy friends laid. In the rush to squeeze every last drop out of this summer, let's all try not to forget the true meaning of summer: Beer, broads, and games. This month's reviews should give you the final word on games to fill your days, before you go out to win the heart of the captain of the cheerleading squad or teach that nosy principal a lesson at night.

GET THE F—K OUT

If these games were all we had to play during the summer, you can bet we'd all have great tans and even bigger beer bellies. So put some sunscreen on that winter-white skin, and take these games to the park or beach (or Wal-Mart parking lot for you small-town folk) with you — they make great frisbees.

MIGHT AND MAGIC VIII: DAY OF THE DESTROYER

Publisher ···➝ 3DO
Developer ···➝ New World Computing
Rating ···➝ 4
How good is it in jive talk? All dat and a bag of chips ... wifout da dip

STAR WARS: FORCE COMMANDER

Publisher ···➝ Lucas Arts
Developer ···➝ Ronin Entertainment
Rating ···➝ 3
How good is it in jive talk? You betta' take yo' ass to da store wit' dat

LAST CALL

Publisher ···➝ Simon & Schuster Interactive
Developer ···➝ Cutler Creative
Rating ···➝ 3
How good is it in jive talk? Oh no she dain't!

STAY IN

Thankfully, the crop of games in this column is considerably better this month, including two killers. These are the games that make staying inside and avoiding skin cancer fun. Besides, a lot of chicks are into pasty skin and carpel tunnel syndrome! So play up, those beers and babes can wait — you definitely don't want to miss these.

SOLDIER OF FORTUNE

Publisher ···➝ Activision
Developer ···➝ Raven Software
Rating ···➝ 9
How good is it in jive talk? This shit be carryin' on, brothah

THIEF 2

Publisher ···➝ Eidos Interactive
Developer ···➝ Looking Glass
Rating ···➝ 9
How good is it in jive talk? Funky cold medina ... rockin' da' beat to da' strengff

STAR TREK: ARMADA

Publisher ···➝ Activision
Developer ···➝ Activision
Rating ···➝ 7
How good is it in jive talk? *Armada* be runnin' shit all up in the mofo!

WHAT THE NUMBERS MEAN

A freezing-cold beer on a steaming hot day, and a beautiful deaf-mute girl with a fetish for gamers	10
The beer is still cold and the girl is a beautiful deaf-mute, but she's learning rudimentary communication skills	9
The beer is still chilly and the girl is still beautiful. She can speak and hear, but maybe that's not so bad, right?	8
Your beer is teetering on the precarious edge of cold and cool. The pretty girl can and does speak	7
The beer is still palatable and despite being slightly annoying, the girl is fairly attractive	6
Your beer soon won't be drinkable. Girl's got some annoying habits, but there are fleeting moments of happiness	5
The beer is officially lukewarm. Your girl forgets to brush her teeth and you prefer to make love to her in the dark	4
You call this horse piss beer? However, the alcohol helps you through a dreaded session with that nasty wench	3
Wine coolers. The girl has festering boils covering most of her body, but least *something* covers her body	2
O'Doul's or Sharp's. The girl you picked up last night turns out to be Janet Reno	1

KILLER GAME

Any game that receives a 9 or 10 from our rigorous scoring system warrants this nifty logo. If you see the **PC ACCELERATOR** Killer Game stamp, you know it's a game worth buying. Only the true classics deserve this elite status, so don't expect to see this symbol often.

SUICIDE

If we're going to create a stamp for the truly great, then it's only fair to label the unforgivable shit as well. It takes an abominable score of 1 or 2 to qualify for the noose around the neck. Heed our warning: Stay away from these games at all costs.

ACCELE-RATED > >

This additional rating provides specific information on how a game performs on a variety of competing 3D chipsets. We test games on up to four major 3D cards and report back with the true test for any 3D accelerator: How it affects the game. We base these ratings on graphic enhancements, framerates, and performance to give you a good idea of how a game will perform on your 3D card. And if the game is not accelerated at all, we fill it with a joke or a bunch of technobabble you probably won't understand. Either way, you should read it.

(Note: Performance may vary depending on the card and the setup of your system)

ACCELE-RATED

In this little box you'll find out all you need to know about the 3D-ness of the game. We'll talk about different cards, problems, and specifics to help you decide if the game is right for your system. Aren't we nice?

RATINGS > >

Our rating scale is a simple 1 to 10 — no decimal points, no obscure percentages, just a straight score that gets right to the point. Before we score games, they undergo countless hours of testing on different systems, with different 3D cards — our reviewers even play the games under the influence of various narcotics. In the end we stamp a single score on the game, which is essentially a numeric value of the game's worth. We love games and always try to look on the bright side, but when a pile of steaming crap comes in, we won't hold back and allow our readers to waste their money on said crap. You can count on our reviews for honesty, insight, and maybe even a few laughs.

GRAPHICS Rendering quality, FPS, and special effects all contribute to an immersive gaming experience.

SOUND Visceral sound effects and appropriate music can help make a good game great.

DEPTH How often and how long you find yourself playing a game are good indicators of its quality.

DESIGN A great game is one that sucks you in and doesn't let go until it is finished. We call that good design.

PLUSES

+ Here we list various good points about the game in question — in some cases finding three good points is harder than you'd think

MINUSES

– Here is where we point out the games flaws — after all, even the best games aren't perfect

RATING 5

Until further notice (or someone sends us more), Black Star beer is still the official beer of **PCXL** killer game!

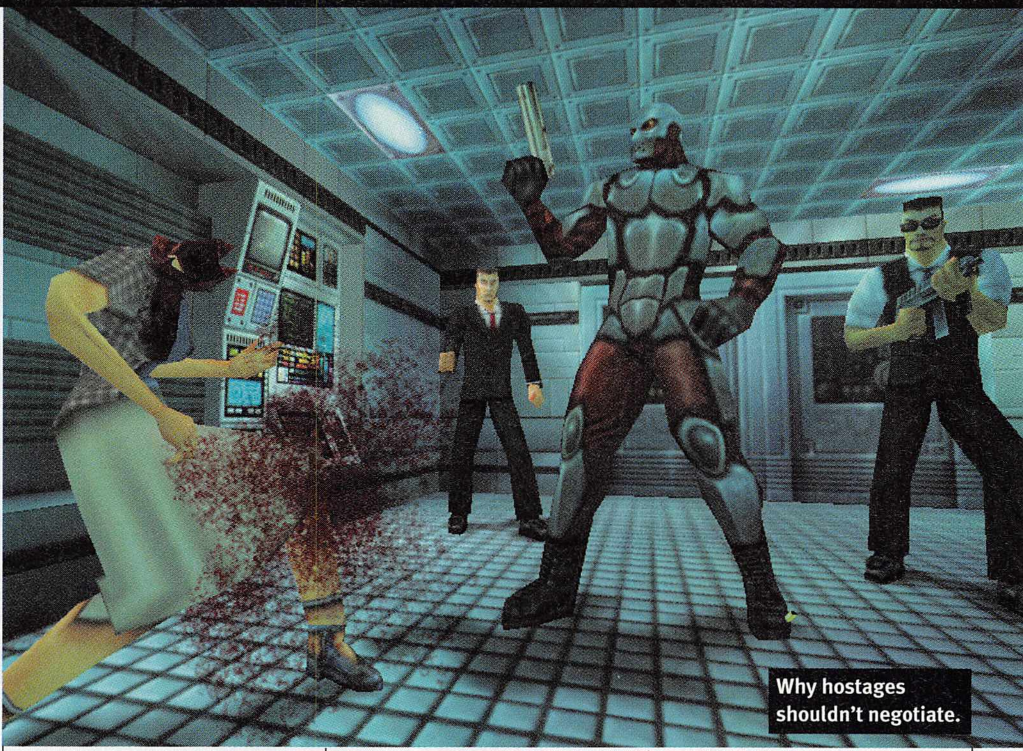
PUBLISHER ⋯› Activision
DEVELOPER ⋯› Raven Software
REQUIRED ⋯› P233, 64MB RAM, 800MB hard drive, OpenGL 3D video card, 4X CD-ROM
IDEAL ⋯› PII 350, 128MB RAM, TNT2 or Voodoo2 card

Soldier of Fortune

ACCELE-RATED

It's OpenGL, so if *Quake II* looked good on your machine, you'll be set. GeForce delivers the best visuals and speed, but any 3D card will do. The graphics are adjustable, so low-end machines can still hang.

It's a bloody job, but by God, it's fun to do it


Why hostages shouldn't negotiate.

Right off the bat, let's get a few things straight. *Soldier of Fortune* is built on the aged *Quake II* engine, so the enemy AI is still just shy of brain-dead, textures are mostly low-res, and the special effects look dated. Many times, especially during the in-game cutscenes, it looks like a decent *Q2* total conversion. *SoF* also stutters and flashes when it's busy loading textures or trying to keep up with the action. It looks at times like a poor man's *Sin* (minus the one-gig install).

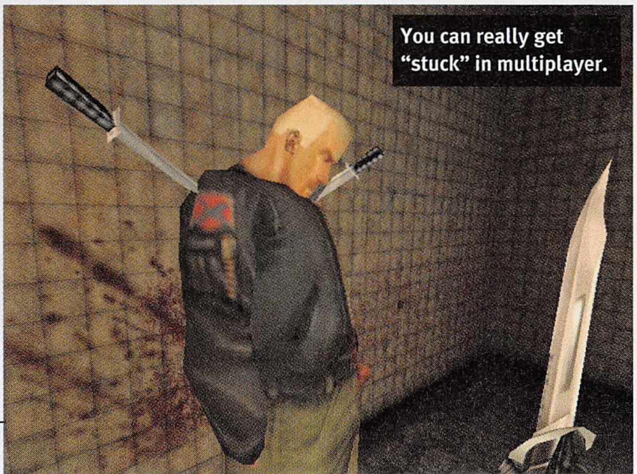
All right, now forget the entire first paragraph (which kinda makes me wonder why the hell I wasted my precious time writing the damn thing.) This game is the most fun I've had since *Half-Life*. Starting with the first couple of missions (seen in the demo on this month's disc) and continuing all the way to the end credits, the game assaults you with screaming enemies who all want to pump you full of lead. They'll keep coming harder, faster, and in greater numbers until you're jumping out of your chair yelling "Die, you dirty bitches, die!" The game clearly aims to make you fee like you're the hero of an action movie. And just like in any good action movie, the plot line throws a few genuine surprising twists at you, thus keeping you away from the just-another-level doldrum to which many FPS fall prey.

In a nutshell, *SoF* is the perfect first-person shooter. You walk forward and shoot anything that tries to stop you.

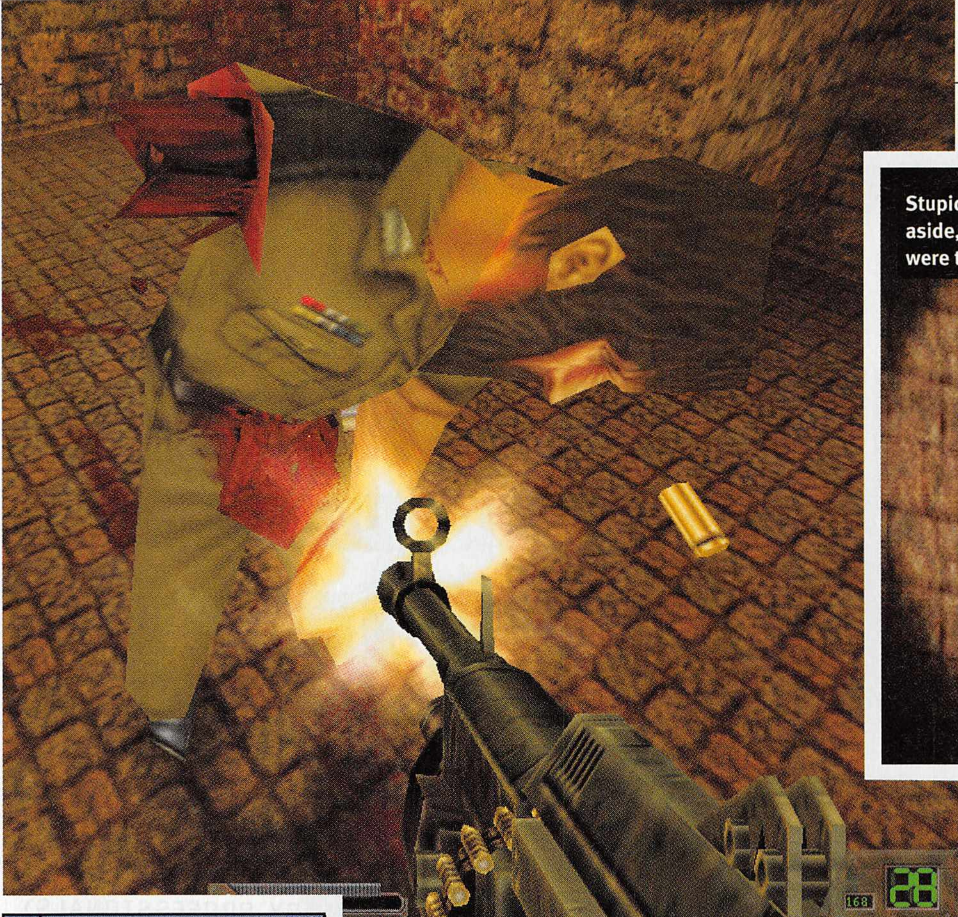
What's amazing is that this never gets boring. The variety of enemies, each with individual models, skins, and weapons, keeps you interested as you travel from place to place. You'll meet leather-clad punks with Mohawks, Siberian snow troopers in all-white camo, and rocket-launching guards in head-to-toe body armor. You're looking like a big bag of Snausages to the bloodthirsty attack dogs these punk bastards sic on you.

Unlike most shooters, the variety of weapons in *SoF* is not there for show. The shotgun, at first your best friend, shows its down side when you can only use it to tickle enemies with full body armor. So you find yourself using the machine gun to get through the body armor, until you realize the machine gun doesn't have enough of a spread to take out a rush of guys. In this situation, our good friend the rocket launcher is there for you — until you blow yourself to pieces shooting someone at close range. You learn

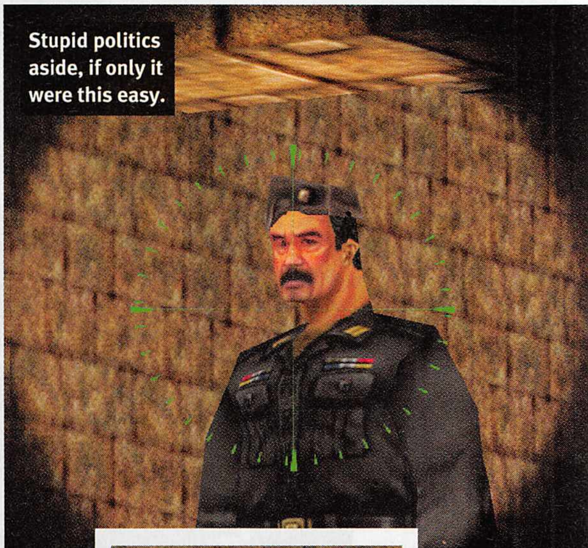
What do you get when you cross the mass graves at Kosovo with The Gap?


You can really get "stuck" in multiplayer.

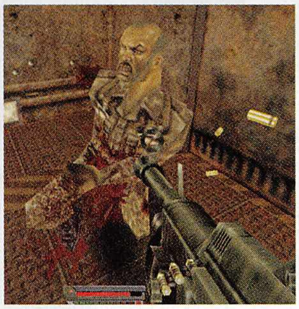
John Mullins is a real-life soldier of fortune, just like the rest of the staff



No guts, no glory. Oh well, guess he gets all the glory.



Stupid politics aside, if only it were this easy.



Now how am I supposed to get my turban on?

When translated, disarmed Russian troops in *SoF* say "Oh my — please don't hurt me!"

OTHER GUNS FOR HIRE

PALADIN *(Have Gun, Will Travel)*
Here's a guy who was the best gunfighter *ever*. When he was contracted for a job, it was never in question whether or not he'd gun the guy down, it was just unclear how he'd do it

THE A-TEAM ("The A-Team")
So maybe these soldiers never got paid, but think about how much "fortune" was needed to fire those thousands of rounds and never get hit — or hit anyone else

VALERIE IRONS ("V.I.P.")
Pamela Anderson and her team are forced to complete missions wearing only wet tube tops and skin-tight outfits — just like the pros

quickly that each weapon has its place and you'll repeatedly find yourself either wishing you had a different gun, or laughing at the chump who's about to get wasted.

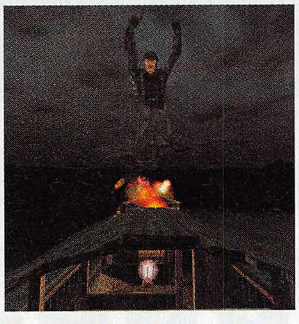
And the word "wasted" is kind, because *SoF* is by far the bloodiest and most realistic shooter we've ever seen. This game makes the battle scenes in *Braveheart* look like a "Punch and Judy" show. You'll shoot, stab, and blow up opponents, who burst into blood-spraying body parts. Their horrifying screams are grimly satisfying. We're talking about men clutching their throats and gurgling when you pop them in the throat, grabbing the stump where their leg used to be and listening as they shriek in pain, limping about on wounded limbs. "Visceral" is too light of a word for this game — the graphics and sound in *SoF* are downright psychotic.

The deliberate attention to gore and the balance of the weapons come together in multiplayer, delivering an action-packed, yet tactically complex, gunfighter battle. You can pick from over 40 different player models, unlike merely skins in *UT* or *Q3A*. The weapons are so balanced that in the **PCXL** offices, the favorite weapon is the knife. When was the last time you picked the hand-to-hand weapon over the rocket launcher? Just like in single-player, there is a weapon for every occasion. Of course, if all else fails, head shots always do the trick. Playing through WON is easy and as lag-free as *UT* or *Q3A*.

I am both shocked and pleased to find that *SoF* is more than just a gory shoot-em-up. The initial thrill of the graphics is sustained by the variety of enemies and weapons to use on them and a storyline that gives you a push whenever you might feel the thrill wavering.

I'm telling you, I really felt like a mercenary on a mission in hostile territory, and I'd be damned if I was going to let some pansy-ass weekend warriors keep me from the check I had waiting. I had a load of fun from start to finish — something that even *Half-Life* failed to deliver.

— **MATT HOLMES** *is a real handgun expert, as long he's wielding his trusty mouse*



It's gonna be a hot time in the old train tonight.

GRAPHICS It's essentially a Grade-A *Q2* total conversion. Smoke and mirrors, yes, but what a show!

SOUND Go to South Central in a KKK outfit. It kinda sounds something like that (we imagine).

DEPTH There are 10 million ways to die and another 10 million ways to kill — it knocked *UT* off my hard drive.

DESIGN The focus on fun (and unbelievable gore) is so great that you'll totally ignore its somewhat dated look.

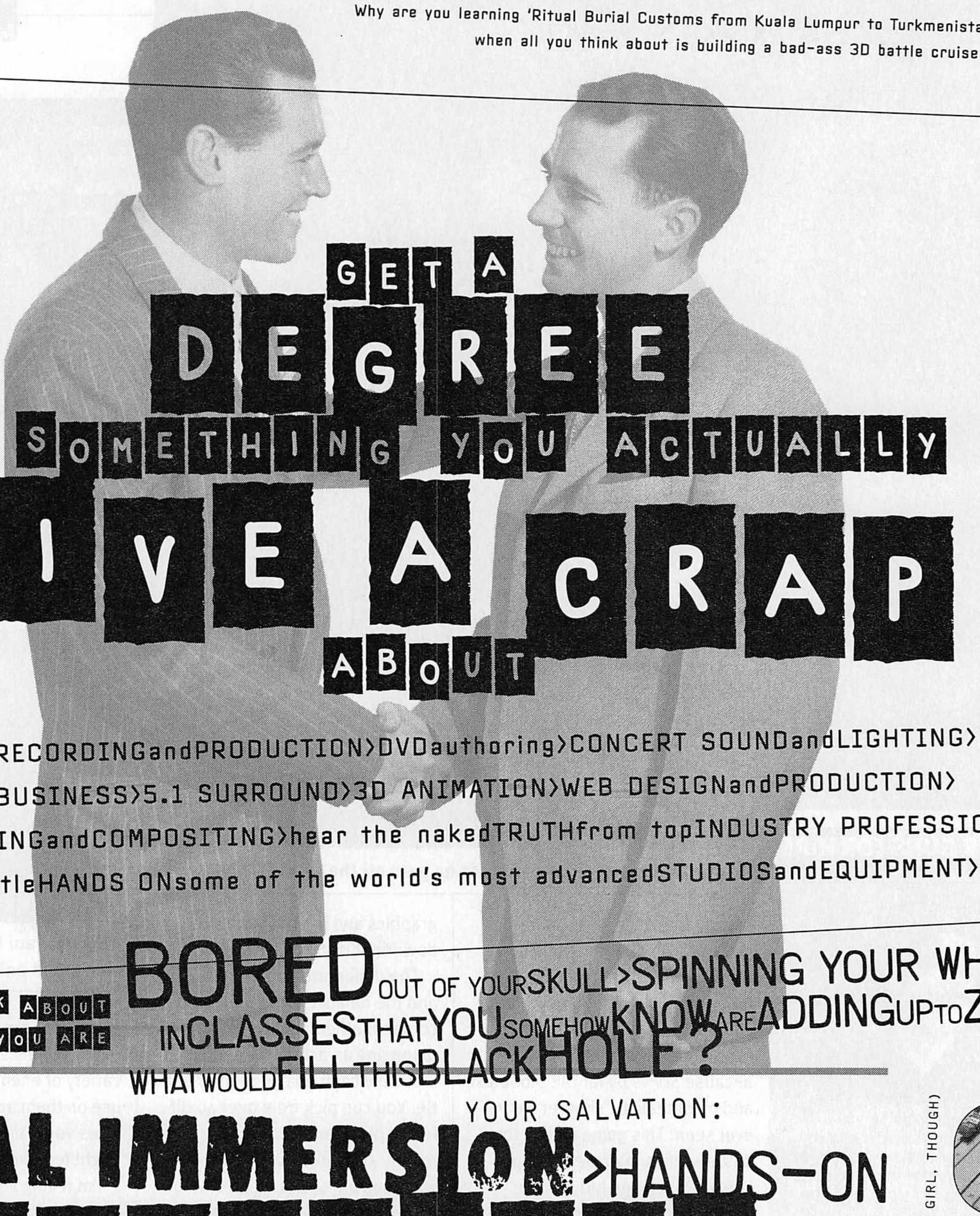
PLUSES

+ Sure to piss off idiot senators
+ You can shoot Saddam Hussein
+ The "clean the blood off your knife" button

MINUSES

- You have to kill unarmed men
- You never get to spend the money you make
- Brain-dead opponents

RATING 9



Go to **http://pcxl.ign.com/gaming411**: Product Number 168

PUBLISHER ⇢ 3DO
DEVELOPER ⇢ 3DO
REQUIRED ⇢ P133, 2MB SVGA graphics card, 32MB RAM, 100MB hard drive, 4x CD-ROM
IDEAL ⇢ 4MB SVGA graphics card, 64MB RAM, 275MB hard drive, 8x CD-ROM

Army Men: Air Tactics

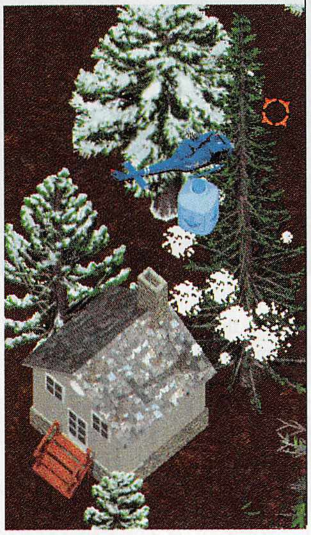
ACCELE-RATED

Set in a world composed of 2D backgrounds and objects, the game makes absolutely no use of hardware acceleration whatsoever, except as the butt of a bad joke ... And 3DO's laughing all the way to the bank.

Wake up and smell the napalm

Some companies deserve to be convicted of war crimes. Consider 3DO, who has bombarded innocent civilians for years with their *Army Men* franchise. And once again, faster than we can yell "Incomiiiiing!" and kiss our collective keisters goodbye, the little green bastards are back. Only this time they're airborne.

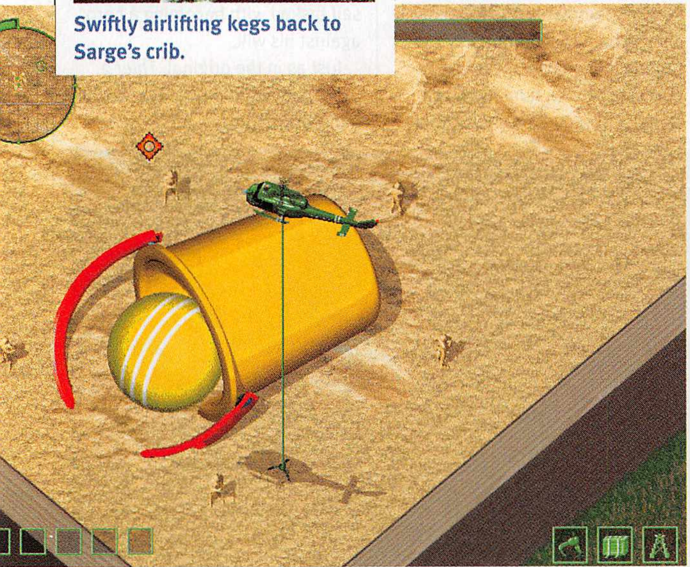
Screw the ground troops, because we're busting out of the acceptable losses bracket and into the Air Cavalry. As Captain William Blade, you'll become a plastic grunt who knows how to pilot a Huey with the best of 'em (but still hasn't figured out that cowboy hats are a major fashion faux pas). We haven't seen the last of Sarge, however. It's usually his surly green butt that we're pulling out of the line of fire.



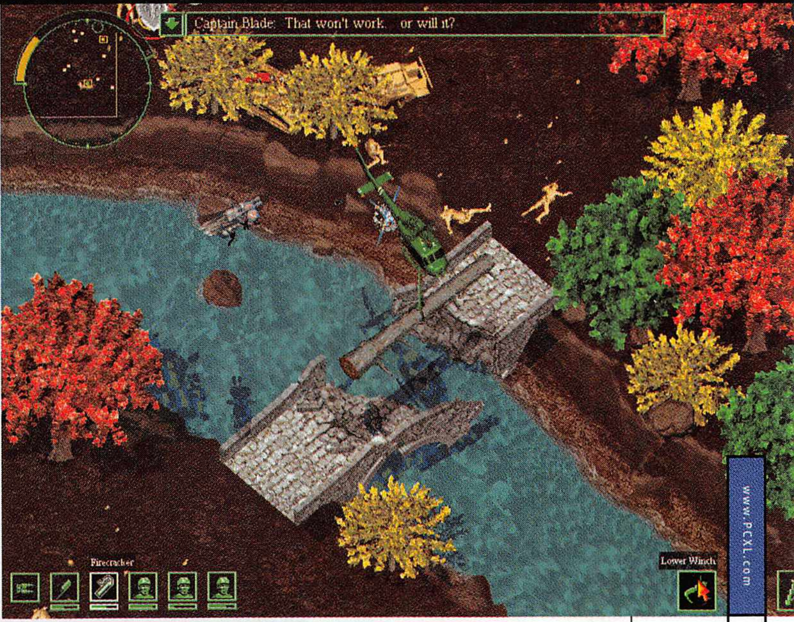
Swiftly airlifting kegs back to Sarge's crib.

Your objective is simple. Pilot one of three copters and whoop the tan army like a red-headed stepchild throughout reconnaissance missions, evacuations, escort runs, and more. Since the evil General Plastro's got his panties in a wad, you'll also have to kick the crap out of the cannon fodder he sends your way. Pencil in mutant bees, foot soldiers, tanks, destroyers, and fire ants on your list of things to kill. Add Verne Troyer while you're at it.

Put bluntly, if not for legal reasons, this game would be called *Nuclear Strike: Half-Assed Edition*. On one hand, *Army Men: Air Tactics* offers puzzles in addition to the fast-paced and action-intensive play mechanics of its main competitor. On the other hand, who really gives a rat's ass when all we really want to do is blow shit up? Having to trip blow drier switches, drain bathroom sinks, and knock over trees to build bridges isn't half as amusing as simply torturing one of the little tan buggers with a magnifying glass and watching him suffer.



I'm squeeeshing their heads.



Hover here a minute ... Captain's gotta drop a log.

Granted, there are plenty of ways here to satisfy at least one of your primal urges — namely murderous rage. Shred toy soldiers with a burst of machine gun fire, rend them limb from limb with bottle rockets or firecrackers, or drop huge balls on their unsuspecting heads (and keep those tea-bagging comments to yourself, perv). Or make like crack American troops in Vietnam and drop napalm on your own squad. No wonder they have flashbacks.

Yet the horrors of war never looked so tame, because the visuals are utter crap. Few disappointments fail to get the blood pumping like a jet of flames that's rendered in jaw-dropping VGA or a pixelated, 256-color explosion. Interaction with the scenery is limited to crashing into trees, setting fires, or catching a ride on a sprinkler's stream of water. And there's little entertainment value to be had from a massacre in which the victims don't bleed.

To be fair, *Army Men: Air Tactics* isn't total crap, it's just a thinking man's shooter. But therein lies the contradiction. Who the hell wants their wanton violence spiked with coherent thought?

— **SCOTT STEINBERG** *swears he never put dresses on his G.I. Joe*

GRAPHICS Whoa man, toilet bowls, twigs, ants, and toy bulldozers never looked so big ... or outdated.

SOUND Since when did the little guys learn to talk so well, let alone compose decent tunes?

DEPTH Hardly worth playing twice, but the first time through it'll frustrate you into addiction.

DESIGN A poor man's *Nuclear Strike* with some interesting puzzles added for flair.

PLUSES
- + Fast action
- + Intriguing puzzles
- + Good controls
- + Passable tunes

MINUSES
- – Crap graphics
- – Too easy
- – Not ballsy enough
- – We just want to blow shit up!

RATING 5

Army Men Lovers: "A club for women who only want to bed army men." We salute you!

killer game!

PUBLISHER ··➔ Eidos Interactive

DEVELOPER ··➔ Looking Glass

REQUIRED ··➔ PII 266, 48MB RAM, 490MB hard drive, DirectX 7.0 video card and sound card, 4X CD-ROM

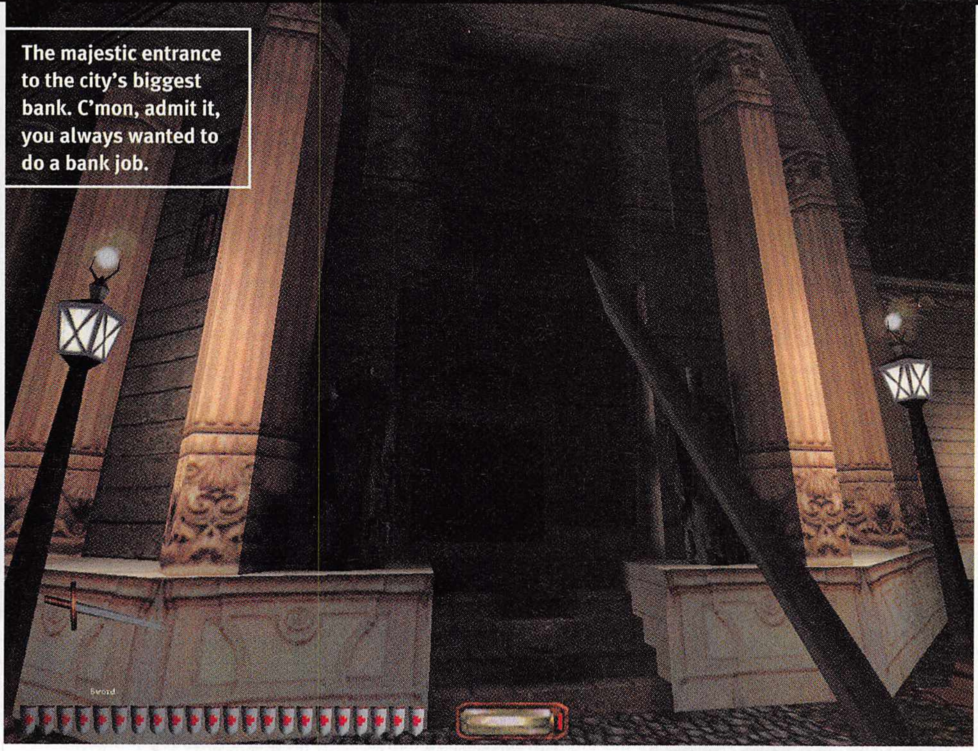
IDEAL ··➔ 400Mhz processor, 64MB RAM, 870MB hard drive, 3D accelerator w/ 16MB VRAM, 8X CD-ROM, EAX2.0/A3D2.0 audio card

ACCELE-RATED

The Dark Engine is looking a bit old and angular these days, but it supports 16-bit textures and beautiful lighting effects. GeForce gives the best colors, but Direct 3D means nearly any card performs admirably.

Thief 2

Because the cool thieves get all the chicks



The majestic entrance to the city's biggest bank. C'mon, admit it, you always wanted to do a bank job.

The original *Thief* was a masterpiece, and considered by many proper, right thinking folks as the best game of 1998. (So what if *Half-Life* came out that same year?) The sequel to *Thief* is finally here, and Looking Glass has given us a perfect example of how more of the same can be just grand, thank you very much. *Thief 2* uses basically the same 3D engine to create a sequel that gives the legions of *Thief* fans what they were craving for, which was, in essence, just more of the same thing.

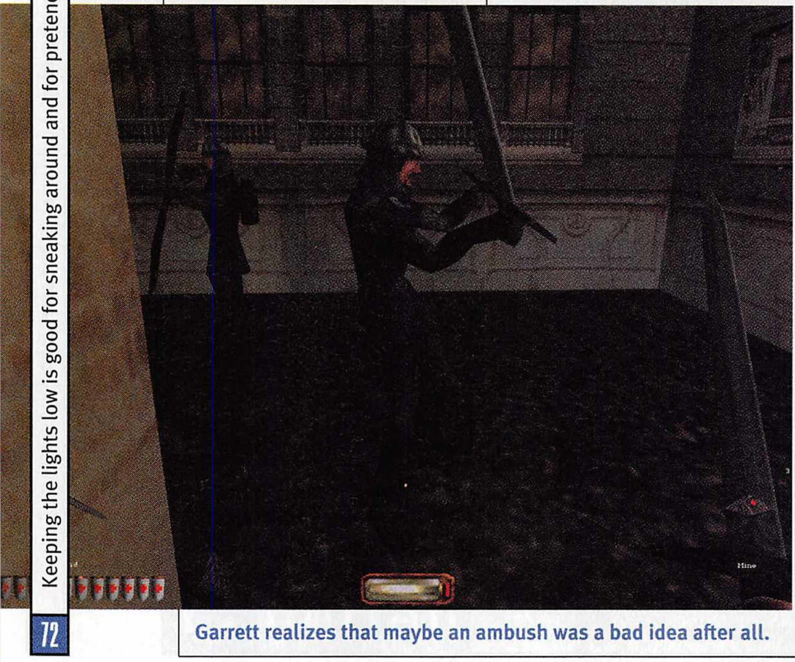
The design focus in *Thief 2* is clearly on urban-based thieving, presumably due to the numerous complaints about the monster levels in the original game. Right from the start of the game, *Thief 2* throws you into a dark fantasy setting where the night rules, stealth is king, and everything is up for grabs — quite literally.

The first mission is unlike anything in the original, tasking the stoic Garrett with covertly clearing a path through the bowels of a mansion so that a lovelorn man can reach his fiancée, a maid being held there against her will.

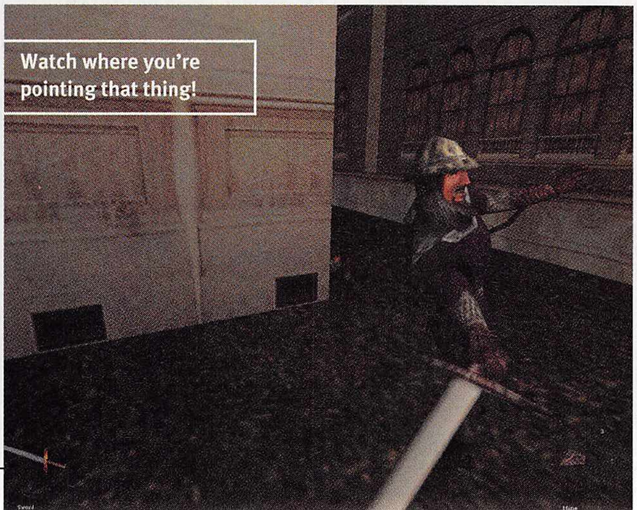
Has the cold, calculating Garrett gone soft? Not hardly. Other missions have you breaking into a bank, framing a cop by putting stolen evidence in his office, and more than a touch of running for your life, escaping ambushes, trailing cops, and stealing any bit of gold that comes into reach. The missions are long, hard, and involving, with a nice mix of indoor and outdoor architecture. And, almost all of the missions take place in urban environments.

The story this time around concerns the replacements for the militaristic Hammerites, the Mechanists, who have created new robotic technology, including guardian robots, humanoid servants, and security cameras that they sell to the city's elite. What's more, the new law in town, a man named Truant, is cracking down on crime in the city with an iron fist, and people keep disappearing. Garrett is once more begrudgingly caught in the middle of a conspiracy of evil when Truant starts coming after him, and soon finds himself tasked with becoming a hero against his will.

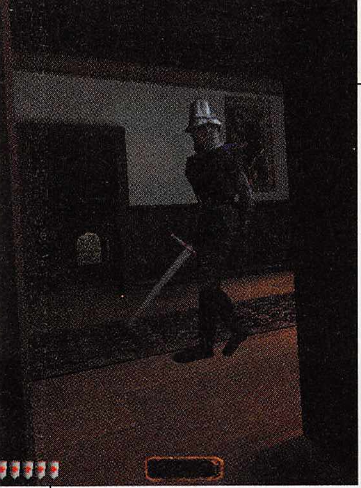
Just as in the original, *Thief 2* uses a beautifully-executed mix of hand-drawn art and animation to



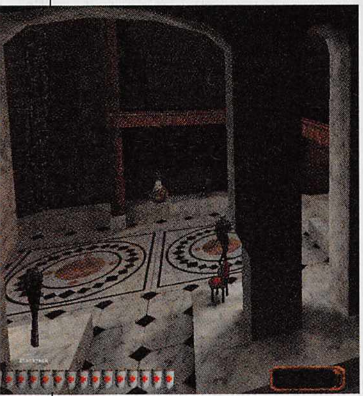
Garrett realizes that maybe an ambush was a bad idea after all.



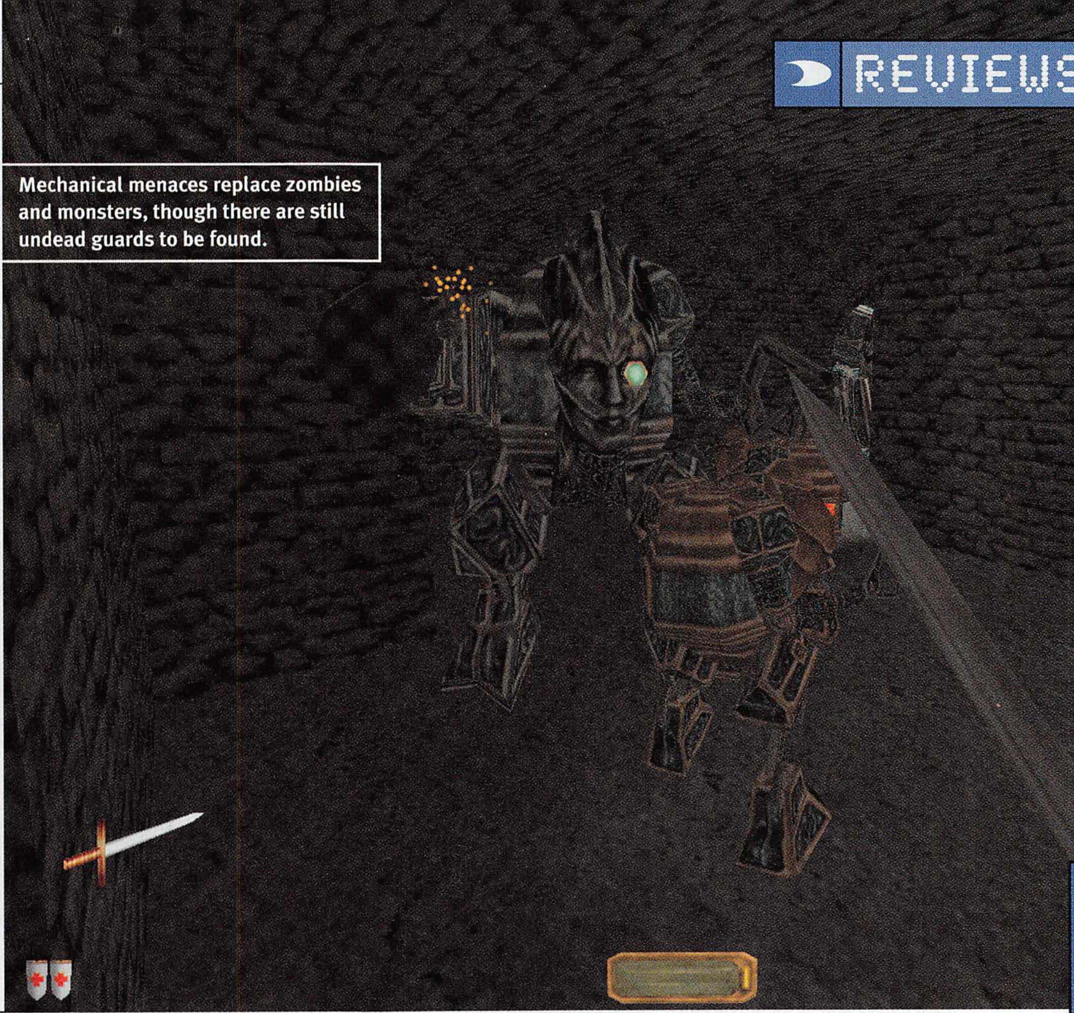
Watch where you're pointing that thing!



Wait for the guard to go by and don't make a sound, fool!



Thieves enjoy watching the guards from a safe perch.



Mechanical menaces replace zombies and monsters, though there are still undead guards to be found.

create its cinematic mission briefings and cutscenes that bring the intriguing story of evil, conspiracy, and double-cross to life. Looking Glass has also brought back the same gruff-sounding, perfectly cast voice actor for the role of Garrett. While the voice acting of the various guards doesn't always fare so well (some of them sound suspiciously like drunken developers), the audio quality, so key to the gameplay, is top-notch in all other regards.

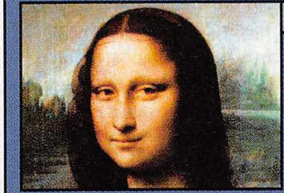
Graphically, the Dark Engine is getting a bit old, however. And while the game's dark atmosphere is portrayed quite effectively, the graphics are looking rather pale compared to the likes of the *Unreal Tournament* or *Quake 3* engines. Characters and landscapes are sharp and angular, though the addition of 16-bit textures helps somewhat. Regardless, unless you're a freak who only cares about graphics, it doesn't really matter. The graphics look good enough and the gameplay is still incredible.

Hiding in shadows, knocking out guards, picking pockets and locks, and avoiding new mechanical menaces, not to mention a whole lot of five-finger discounts, make *Thief 2* the most interesting, distinctive, and downright enthralling game we've seen since, well, the original *Thief*.

The tension in this game is thick enough to cut with a steak knife, and the game's focus on avoiding combat and detection is still truly innovative. There's no multiplayer support, but who cares? *Thief 2* is not only a killer game, it's easily one of the best games of 2000.

— **JASON D'APRILE** *still wants to be just like Garrett (the* Thief *character, not the latest* **PCXL** *new guy) when he grows up*

OTHER GREAT HEISTS IN HISTORY



MONA LISA INSIDE JOB

On August 11, 1911, three Italian nationals living in Paris made off with the classic painting from the Louvre, in a heist masterminded by the mysterious "Il Signore"

OLD ACTOR STEALS ASS

Utilizing a tranquilizer gun and quite possibly alien mind control technology, an old, withering thespian (who will remain nameless) managed to make off with one of the most beloved booties of our time

$5.8 MILLION

A record-breaking mafia heist which spawned legendary mob turncoat Henry Hill, who in turn spawned record-breaking mafia movie *Goodfellas*. In short, there was a whole lot of spawning going on

AMERICA'S HEART

The collective sheeple of America had their hearts stolen by another lackluster comedy because *TV Guide* told them to. We sincerely believe we could get more laughs by watching our mothers die of lung cancer than from "Malcolm in the Middle." But what the hell ... the mob has spoken. We love Malcolm!

GRAPHICS *Thief* didn't look great, and *Thief 2* only adds a few effects and lighting — nothing earth-shattering.

SOUND Great voices, suspenseful sound effects, and ambient noises. Totally awesome.

DEPTH Lots of stealth, sneaking, and tactics. This is as deep as first-person action games get.

DESIGN Excellent levels that will constantly keep paranoid gamers on the edge of their seats.

PLUSES

+ Fantastic, distinctive gameplay
+ Excellent missions
+ Incredible audio and lots of cool sound effects

MINUSES

- 3D engine looks old compared to other big games
- Gameplay takes adjustment and may turn action junkies off

RATING 9

Bad Idea of the Month: To have Chuck re-enact the Catherine Zeta-Jones ass shot from *Entrapment*. Ick!

PUBLISHER ···› LucasArts

DEVELOPER ···› Ronin Entertainment

REQUIRED ···› P266, 64MB RAM, 454MB hard drive, 8MB PCI/AGP D3D card, 16-bit sound card, 4x CD-ROM, DirectX 7.0

IDEAL ···› PIII-500, 128MB RAM, 8x CD-ROM, and a lot of forgiveness in your cold, black, jaded heart

Star Wars: Force Commander

ACCELE-RATED

Force Commander will hardly push your accelerator card. There were no graphical risks taken here in the attempt to break new ground. It looks best on a TNT2, but looks pretty shite on every card we tested.

"Mmmm. Crap, this game is."

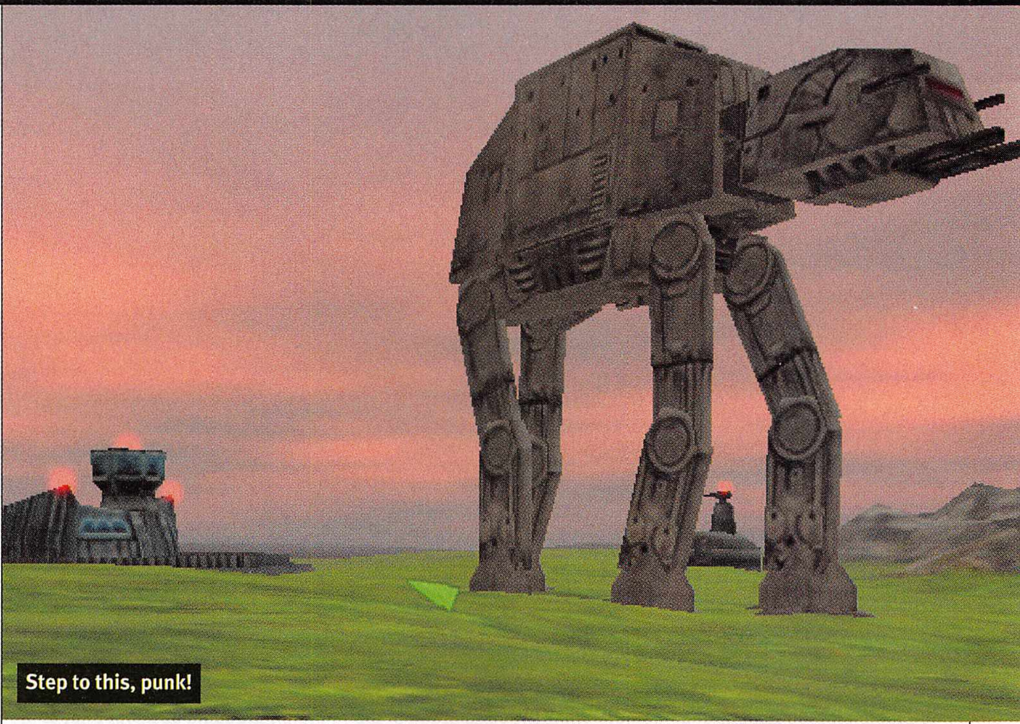
There was a time when seeing "Star Wars" in the title actually meant something. From Underoos to *Jedi Knight II*, if it said "Star Wars" on it, you knew it was a good purchase — or a good fit, as it were. But times have changed and now the Star Wars brand gets used on items I wouldn't expect to see on a Thai hooker. As if crap like *Episode I* and *Rebellion* obviously weren't enough, now we are forced to bear witness as *Force Commander* brings the Star Wars license to its knees.

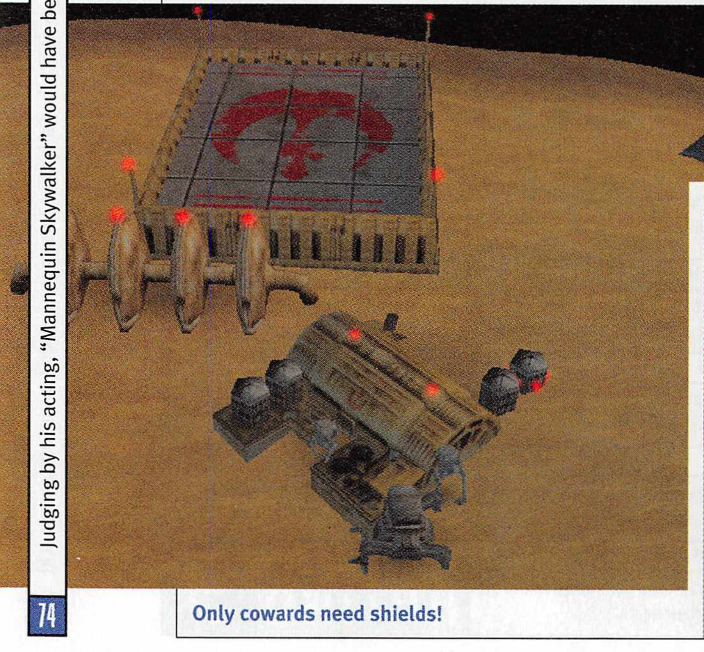
Sure, it may not be easy to design a 3D realtime strategy game in the Star Wars universe, but with so many amazing strategy games like *AOE II, Homeworld*, and *Myth II* out there, it should be easy to compile a list of must-have features. Unfortunately *Force Commander* was released missing several of those key ingredients.

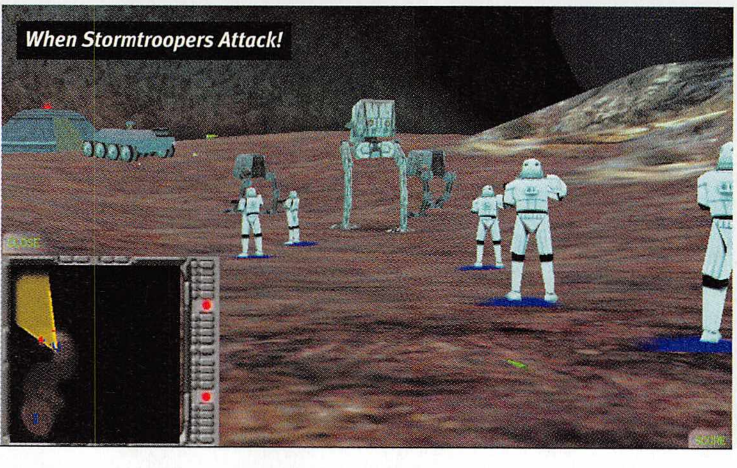
Force Commander's storyline runs parallel with the first three movies. You take the role of brothers Brenn and Dellis Tantor, and you're responsible for all the background operations not seen in the movies. Using a 3D engine similar to *Warzone 2100* and *Myth II*, *Force Commander*'s first problem is in the 3D camera itself. While the camera does have a ton of keyboard and mouse commands, its movement is so jerky that you'll often spin it out of position and have to come scrolling back. However, there is a Shift-X command that binds your favorite camera angle to the X key — but it still doesn't make up for the clumsy camera movement.

Unit AI is Stormtrooper quality (i.e., retarded). Even after selecting a Posture (Passive, Defensive, Guard, and Belligerent), your units respond to threats like simpering morons. They'll attack a wounded Troop Transport when they should be attacking the infantry it just dropped off. Units don't take advantage of speed or mobility (such as speeder bikes and swoops) and thus lose battles they should easily have won. These dumb-asses are unequivocally screwed if you're not babysitting them at all times.

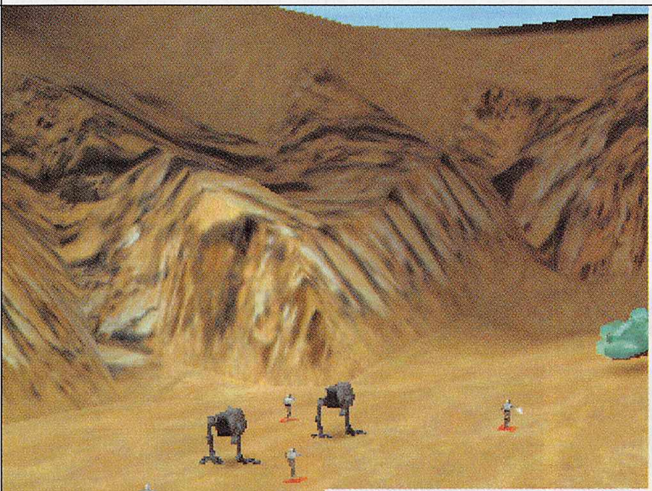
But wait, there's more! Bad AI is just the tip of this licensed-crap iceberg. The pathfinding in *Force Commander* is utterly useless. Squads split up to avoid an obstacle, even though you haven't instructed them to disperse. And that's if you're lucky. Many times units will try to walk right through buildings. Sometimes units get completely stuck attempting to get around a mountain. In an RTS, pathfinding is the one thing that HAS to be right and *Force Com-*

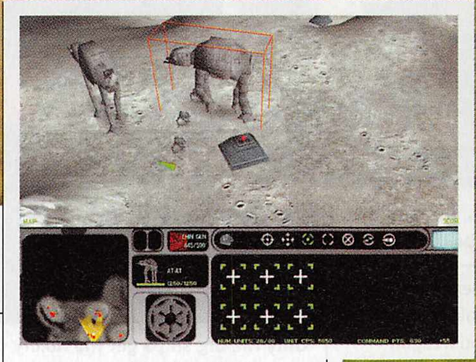

Step to this, punk!


Only cowards need shields!

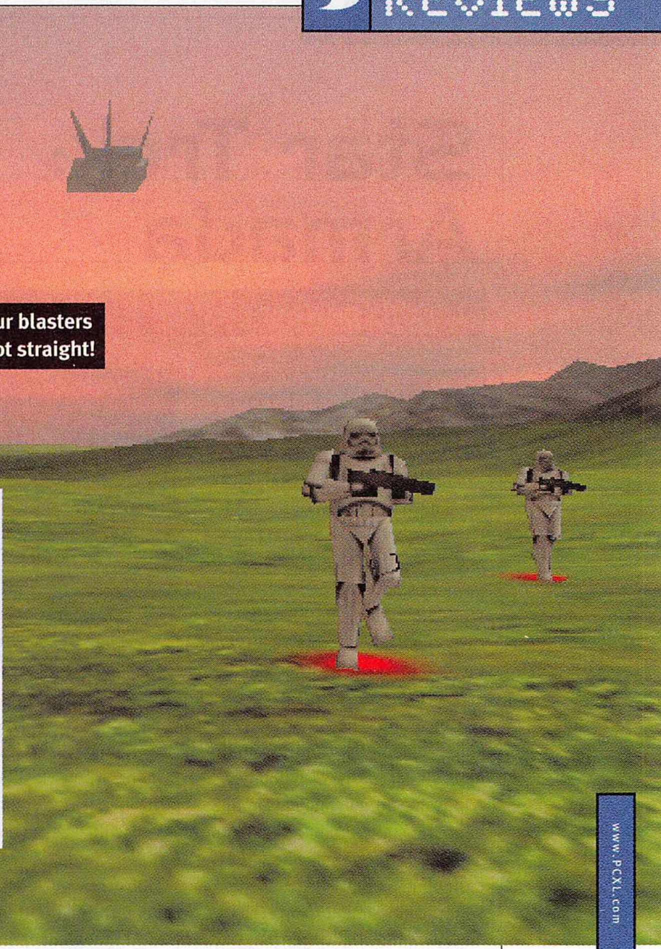

When Stormtroopers Attack!

Judging by his acting, "Mannequin Skywalker" would have been a better name for "Baby Darth"





Above: Bring the pain!
Right: Due to lame pathfinding, this AT-AT is stuck.



Woohoo, our blasters finally shoot straight!

mander does this worse than any RTS in recent memory.

At the heart of *Force Commander*'s resource management are Command Points; everything you buy (including repairs) uses them. These points are accumulated by taking and holding control of various command bunkers hidden throughout the map, or by wiping out your enemy's units and buildings. This encourages aggressive styles of play, which may turn off RTS veterans (like me) who live to build and manage resources.

Another problem is the interface. Sure, you can hide it with the touch of the Tab key, but when you really need it, it blocks almost half the screen! Look closely and you'll discover a lot of wasted space that serves no purpose except to obstruct your view of the battle.

Force Commander's graphics are nothing to brag about either. Sadly, units and structures will often engage in a game of "hide the polygon" — this is some of the worst 3D clipping I've ever seen. You can max the resolution out at an impressive 1028x768/32-bit color, but your CPU will strain under the burden. Lockups and jerkiness are common at the maximum setting, even on a PII-450.

Audio is a mess. *Force Commander*'s techno-mixed Star Wars music is unforgivable. LucasArts just had to front — they couldn't keep it real. The various other sound effects in the game are subpar: Blaster screeches, Probe Droid chatter, and Tie-Fighter whizzing sound just like they did in the movies — yet again.

Other than the entertaining cutscenes and the always enjoyable act of killing Ewoks, *Force Commander* is a complete failure. This game was obviously released unfinished. But fear not — it might be playable with about nine patches. Of course, as expected, the game will sell because of the Star Wars license, but you should save your money.

– **NASH WERNER** *is more machine than man now, twisted and evil*

OTHER STAR WARS THINGS THAT SUCK

JAR-JAR BINKS

WHAT IT IS ···> The flappy-lipped, mumble-mouth, "I don't know nuttin' 'bout birthin' no babies" character who singlehandedly ruined *Episode One*

WHY HE SUCKED ···> If you need to ask, you probably suck too

BATTLE DROIDS

WHAT THEY ARE ···> Foldable, walking stick figures that pretty much explode on contact

WHY THEY SUCK ···> They inspire more laughter than fear. At least the Stormtroopers *looked* tough

NABU

WHAT IT IS ···> The homeland of Jar-Jar Binks

WHY IT SUCKS ···> It looks like an excerpt from a Saturday morning cartoon. We kept waiting for Jar-Jar and his buddies to break into their rendition of "Under the Sea" — in retrospect that might not have been so bad

REAGAN'S STAR WARS

WHAT IT IS ···> Laser-oriented super-commie crusher particle beam nuclear missile zapper

WHY IT SUCKED ···> Pansy-ass Americans didn't want to pay an extra penny for their damn french fries so the whole thing got nixed, Reagan fell asleep, and Russia collapsed anyway

GRAPHICS 3D clipping, dull textures, and a worthless interface. Seeing AT-ATs romp around is a plus.

SOUND You've heard it all before. Star Wars music mixed with a cheesy dance-beat.

DEPTH Adds Imperial plots we didn't get to see in the movies. Too bad the gameplay is deeply flawed.

DESIGN Awful interface and an unforgivable lack of unit formations — another problematic Star Wars game.

PLUSES

+ Star Wars units
+ Imperial Campaign
+ Killing Ewoks
+ AT-ATs are always cool

MINUSES

- Horrible pathfinding
- Command Point system
- Retarded AI
- Yet another bad SW strategy game

RATING 3

In its first weekend, *Episode One* on video netted yet another $100 million for Uncle George

PUBLISHER ···› Activision
DEVELOPER ···› Activision
REQUIRED ···› P200, 32MB RAM, 600MB hard drive, 4X CD-ROM, DirectX sound card
IDEAL ···› P266, 64MB RAM, second generation 3D card

Star Trek: Armada

ACCELE-RATED

There is a software mode, but it is as ugly as Janet Reno in the morning. This baby was meant for 3D acceleration and runs smoothly on GeForce, TNT 2, and Voodoo 3. It looks best with GeForce, however.

Let this be your next battlefield

A successful invasion is usually made through crucial and unexpected routes, and *Star Trek: Armada* opens hostilities by kicking your butt through your eyes. From a spectacular opening movie and slick-as-oil animation to its gorgeous nebulae-and-asteroid-studded strategic map, *Armada* is rivaled only by Interplay's *Starfleet Command* as the best-looking PC Trek ever.

The set-up: The Federation starship Premonition returns from the all-too-near future with bad news. A massive Borg invasion is imminent and in the Premonition's time line, the Federation is already a crumbling memory. In a scheme superficially similar to *WarCraft* or *C&C*, *Armada* challenges players through 26 missions, which allow control of Federation, Klingon, Romulan, and Borg forces. It seems Activision has finally loosened the creative stranglehold at Paramount, because not only is *Armada* cross-licensed (with elements from "Next Generation" and "DS9"), it also contains entirely new ship classes and weapon types. Hardcore Trekkers need not worry, however, it's all done with keep-the-faith attention to detail.

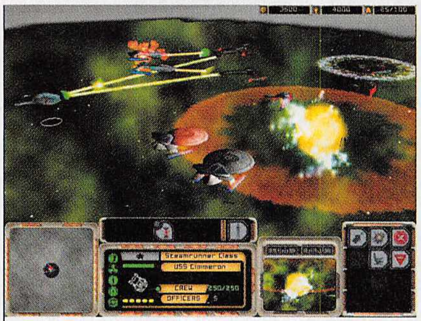
At first glance, *Armada* looks surprisingly like *Starfleet Command* — the "void" of space is an attractive grid with stunning planets and glowing colored nebulae, crisscrossed with tumbling rifts of asteroid fields. Even casual Trekkers know that shields and sensors malfunction in certain nebula regions. This concept is expanded upon with color-coded clouds which represent unique types of nebulae that can disrupt weapons, kill off crew, or even speed repair and restoration of a ship to good health.

No matter which race you're playing, *Armada* is, at its heart, a familiar click-and-send game. You'll build starbases to serve as production centers, ore-mining freighters to collect Dilithium, and of course, drydock yards to build your race-specific ships. The empires are well-matched on the surface, but each holds special technologies which can be devastating if skillfully employed. The Romulans have their famed cloaking device, of course, as well as treacherous tricks like a shield inversion weapon that sucks your shields dry even as you're being bombarded. The Borg, of course, are all about assimilation.

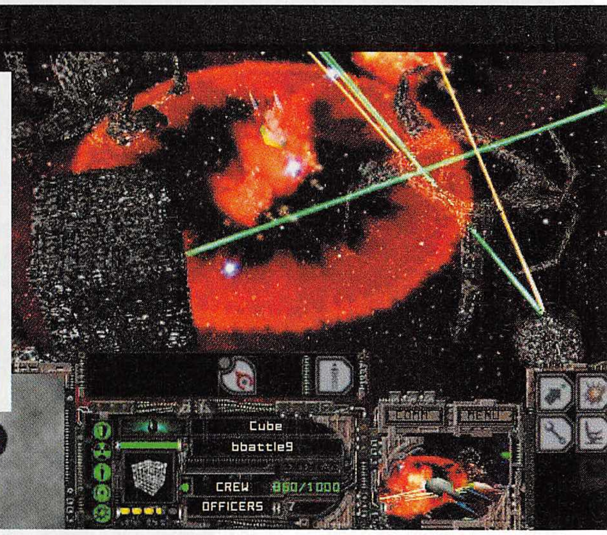
While there is nothing really revolutionary in this game, there doesn't really have to be. *Armada* is brimming with little touches that make it a joy from start to finish. For added visual delight, switch on the Director's Cut option, which takes the standard RTS you shoot/I shoot exchanges and turns them into 3D dogfights. It doesn't affect much, but it is pretty cool.

If there's a notable flaw, it's that the enemy AI, while competent, could not be called brain-wringing. Your foes will fight relentlessly, but they will not respond to the destruction of critical installations with the tenacity of a *StarCraft* combatant. Experienced gamers may only find long-term obsession in the eight-player LAN/Internet skirmishes. *Star Trek: Armada* will please any Trekker with the urge to play armchair admiral.

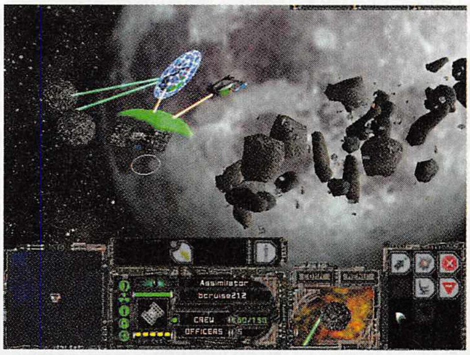
— **CHRIS HUDAK** *will not be leaving the house for several days now, and it's all Activision's fault*

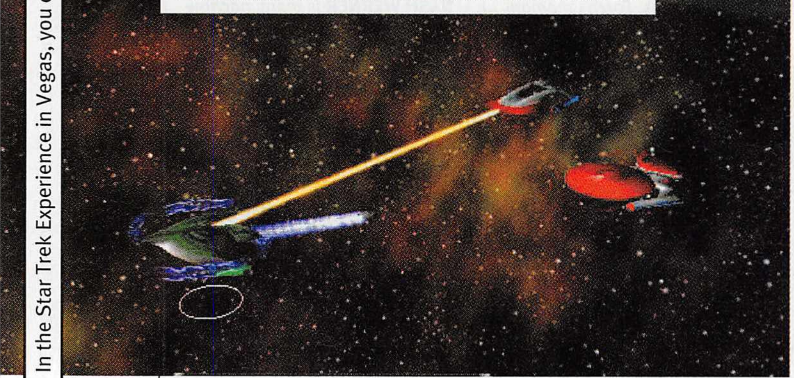


Feds and Klingons, the way God intended them to be.



Only the big ships get the luxury of such an impressive demise.





"The Myotronic Inhibitor" — get hit with this, and you may as well start running, 'cause you can't fight.

GRAPHICS Cinematics swoop into gameplay mode fluidly, starships spit lightning; plus gorgeous nebulae.

SOUND Stellar, complete with top-notch voicework and excellent weapon sound effects.

DEPTH Lots of detail and nerdy show references. Ultimately AI tapers off, but still engaging.

DESIGN Fluid and geared toward armchair fleet control more than tedious micromanagement.

PLUSES
- + Showboat graphics and locales; compelling cinematics
- + Real sense of ships' worth
- + Geekroscopic attention to detail

MINUSES
- - Enemy AI could be more brutal
- - No hand-holding tutorials
- - It's a Star Trek game, and we remember the last one that sucked

RATING 7

WE UNDERSTAND...

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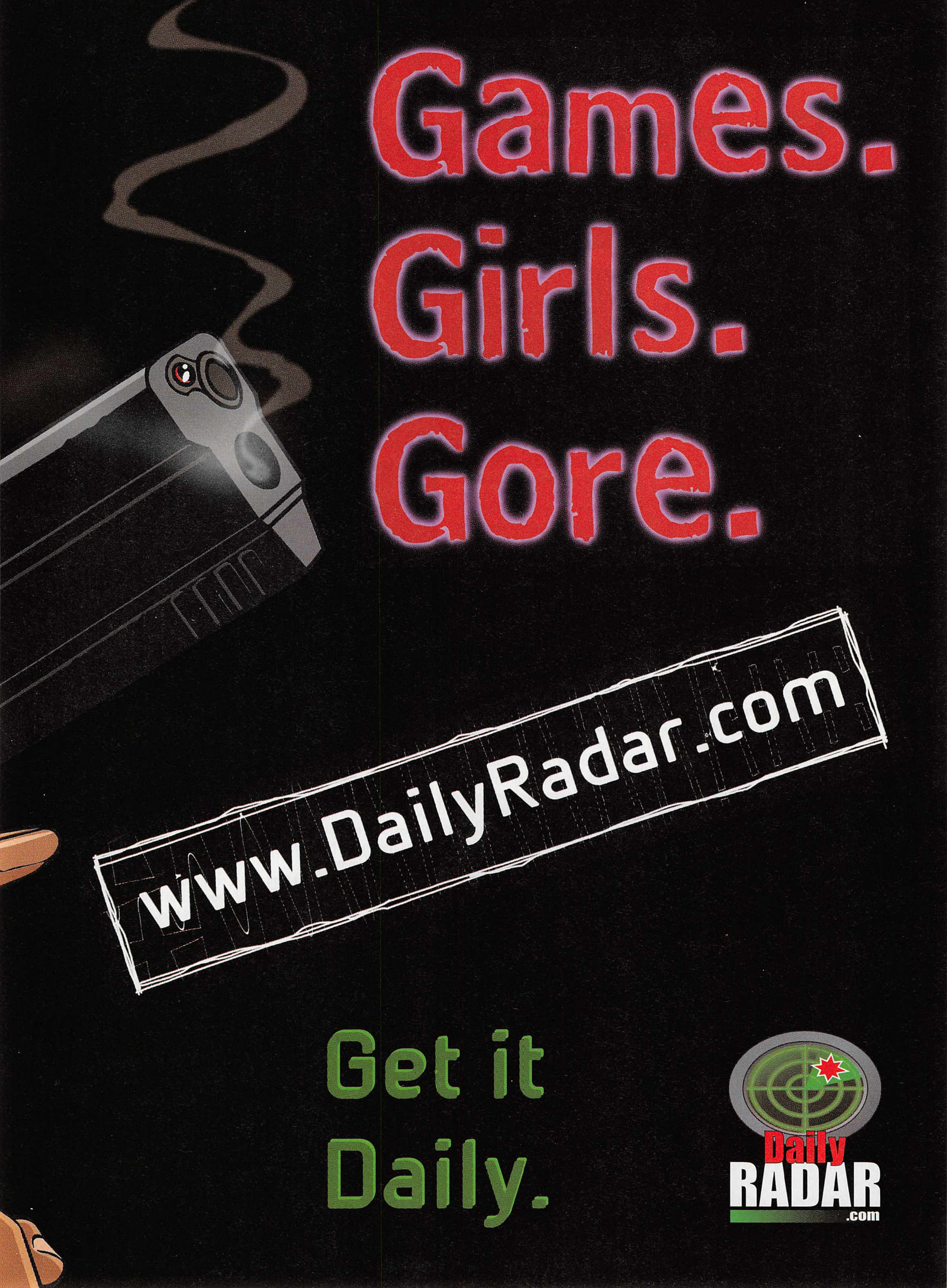
Konoko from Oni
by Bungie



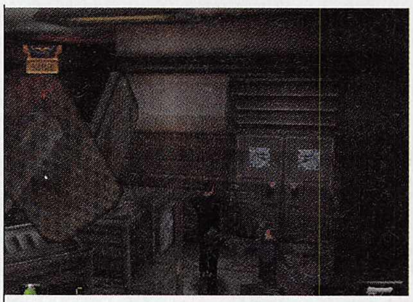
PUBLISHER ··> Fox Interactive
DEVELOPER ··> N Space
REQUIRED ··> P200, 32MB RAM, 23MB hard drive, love of Elvis impersonators
IDEAL ··> P233, 64MB RAM, 300MB hard drive, thinning hairline

Die Hard Trilogy 2: Viva Las Vegas

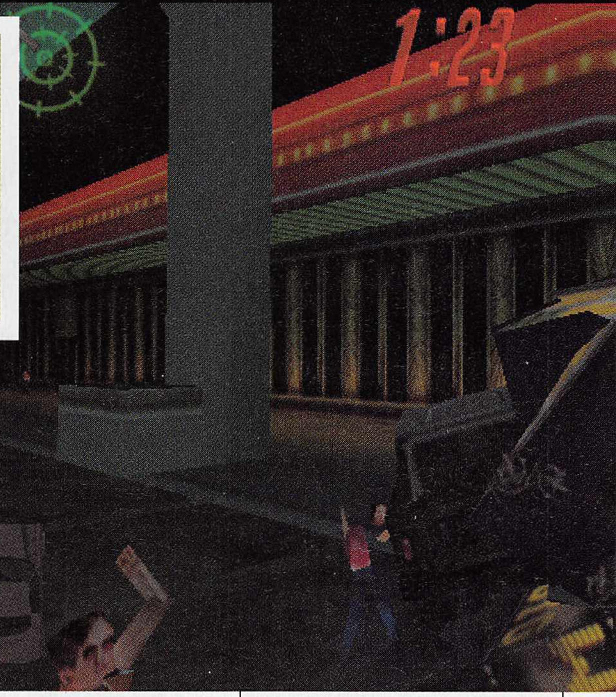
ACCELE-RATED

Apparently someone thought blocky PSX-style characters fit the bill — not on our PC. All the fancy 3D cards in the world won't save you from this lackluster, three in one feast of mediocrity.

Puttin' a hurt on "White Trash Mecca"



The Flamingo Hotel's entrance really needs upgrading, yes?



Hollywood-inspired games "should" be good, right? You've got great story lines, established characters, and tremendous creative talent ... so why do we keep getting games based on movie licenses that convey about as much of the film's energy and appeal as the inevitably tied-in McDonald's Happy Meal?

Barring true depth of content, a game based on a movie, especially a visual spectacle like *Die Hard*, should at least look really sharp, right? Had this game stayed true to the promise of the license, it would've blown us right out of our chairs. But alas, *Die Hard Trilogy 2: Viva Las Vegas*, fails to deliver anything more than an anemic punch to the mid-section.

DHT2 once again thrusts hapless New York City cop John McClane into the path of rampaging terrorists, only this time you're in neon-lit Las Vegas. The game begins with a former colleague of McClane's inviting you and McClane to a big bash, celebrating the friend's ascension to the post of prison warden. Apparently, Caesar's Palace was booked, so the ill-fated party is held at the prison itself, just outside Vegas. (This sort of block-headed thinking fits in perfectly with the blocky PSX-style character graphics.)

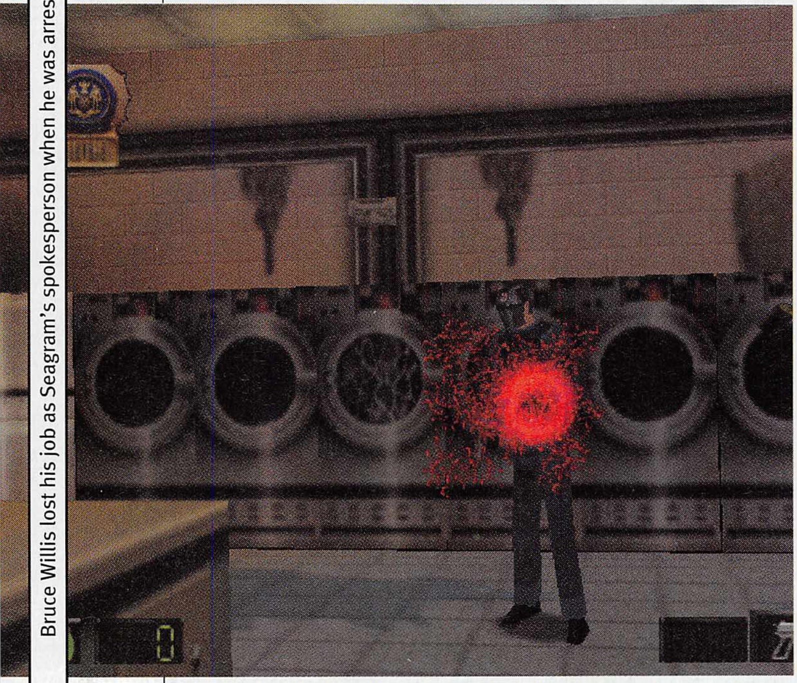
To everyone's surprise, a captive terrorist chooses just that moment to stage a prison break and the predictable shit hits the fan. Terrorists, thugs, and prison guards (not to mention a slinky former spy in a cocktail dress) run completely amuck, taking over a casino and generally displaying bad manners. Since the entire LVPD seems to have been felled by a massive narcolepsy attack, only you, John McClane, can save the day.

Here *DHT2* made an interesting try for greatness, though it falls far short. The game is actually three games set within the aforementioned hack, er, story line, thrusting players into a first-person shooter, a third-person action/adventure and last (and certainly is least), a driving game.

The shooter is enjoyable merely running through a casino while blasting bad guys is empirically fun, but it's leagues behind the leaders in the genre, such as *Unreal Tournament*. This section is the only part of the game truly worth playing, and watching the bullets literally chew up the surrounding scenery is a hoot. The less said about the other two "mini-games" the better. But understand this: They are crap.

The three-in-one idea is nice in theory (of course, so is communism), but I'd personally rather have one good game than three crappy ones. Save yourself the trouble and pick up *Quake III*, *Shadow Man*, or *Need For Speed: High Stakes*, and enjoy the genres done right.

— **GEORGE STARK** *has better hair than Bruce Willis*



This is what the laundramat attendant does to you when you forget to take your clothes out of the dryer.

Bruce Willis lost his job as Seagram's spokesperson when he was arrested for drunk driving

www.DailyRadar.com

GRAPHICS If *DHT2* were a girl, you'd have to tell your buddies "she's got a great personality."

SOUND Pretty good for typical game techno, while the boom-boom gunshots are just fine.

DEPTH *Die Hard* flicks were never known for their depth. The game accurately adapts this from the movie.

DESIGN The three-games-in-one idea would be great if all (or even two?) of the games were fun.

PLUSES

- + Only a wuss wouldn't want to be John McClane
- + Shooter section is fun
- + More fun than tonsillitis

MINUSES

- - They f—ked up a great movie license
- - Clunky animation
- - Driving and third-person games

RATING 5

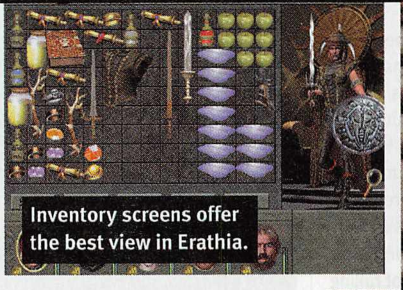
PUBLISHER ··➤ 3DO	**DEVELOPER** ··➤ New World Computing
REQUIRED ··➤ P166, 32MB RAM, 375MB hard drive, 4x CD-ROM drive	**IDEAL** ··➤ P250, 32MB RAM, 12x CD-ROM drive, an affinity for all things mediocre

Might and Magic VIII: Day of the Destroyer

Erathia on 20,000 Gold a Day

ACCELE-RATED

The hardware acceleration is so dated that it's a toss-up with the software decceleration. Hardware gives you marginal 3D depth, while software gives slightly better colors. This isn't what you bought that 3D card for.


Inventory screens offer the best view in Erathia.

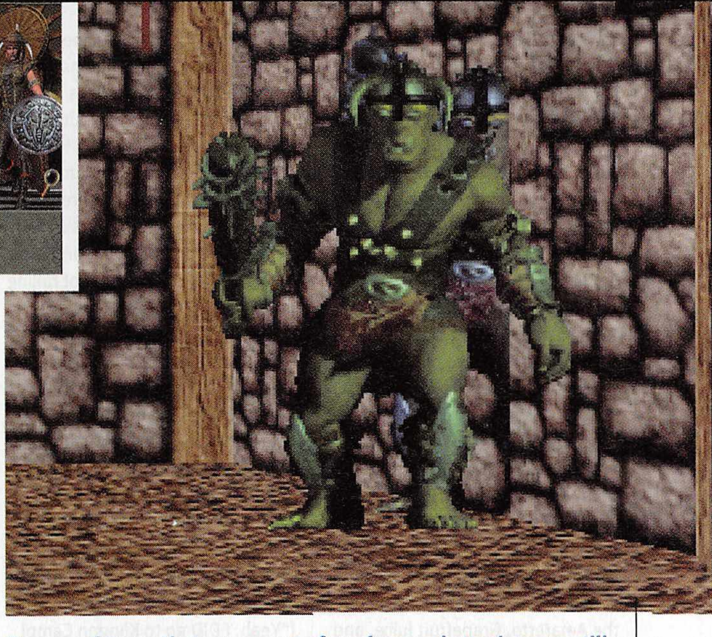
The story: A giant crystal summoned forth by a mysterious wandering mage has released the destructive forces of the four elemental planes on Jadame, one of medieval Erathia's provinces. Lava lakes, torrential floods, earthquakes, and tornadoes have unleashed terror on the populace. Can you and your trusty band save the world? Yadda, yadda, yadda.

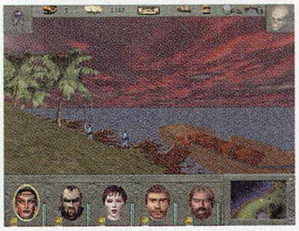
Of course, you already know about this long-running series, right? *M&M VIII* lets you fulfill dozens of quests for Jadame, gaining experience and training your party of five PC's in 24 skills and an assortment of spell categories. The game is turn-based or realtime, the view is first-person, and the graphics are butt-ugly.

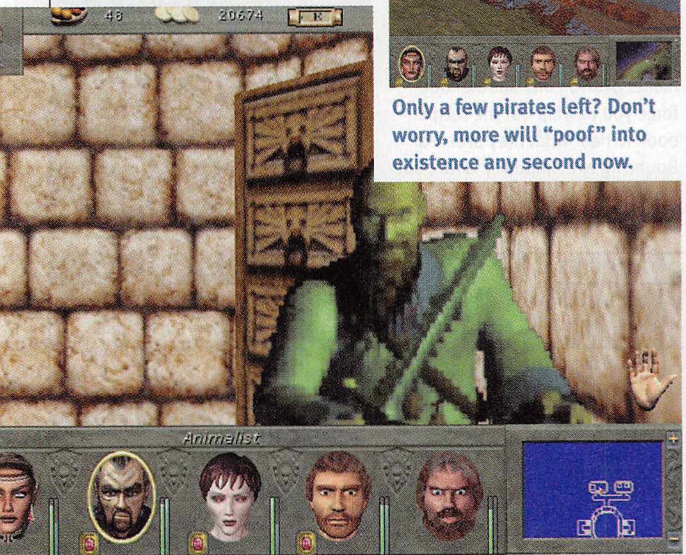
M&M VIII simplifies gameplay from previous iterations. For example, each race/profession has one advancement quest, while *M&M VII* required a pair of such quests before you could reach the pinnacle of a given profession. The "elemental" magic (air, fire, water, and earth) and "self" magic (spirit, mind, and body) spells are now grouped for sale in two shops, instead of being spread out among seven. The resulting game requires less non-combat work to win, but removes several hurdles to advancement, which once made victory seem worth the effort.

In *M&M VI*, considerable strategy was required to determine appropriate purchases and quests, because treasure was scarce. By contrast, in *M&M VIII*, I never had to purchase anything, save spells. By early mid-game (around level 20) I'd found several +58 plate armors, more than 20 strong spell wands, and a ton of gold.

At least each dungeon is distinctive, with a wide variety of monsters just waiting to disembowel your party. Good use is made of multiple level battles and hidden access routes.


Beware of Ogres that appear out of nowhere and attack, some still half-stuck in the walls.


Only a few pirates left? Don't worry, more will "poof" into existence any second now.



If you're attacked by an animalist, either he should change shape, or you should. Unfortunately, neither of these things happen.

While dungeon combat is the game's greatest strength, graphics are its biggest weakness. *M&M VIII* shares the graphical engine of its last two *M&M* siblings, an engine that creaked when it was new. Expect coarse pixellation, sparse animation, humdrum special effects, poor textures, uninteresting opponents, and faceless villager clones. Designers make creative use of 3D space, but the visually evocative artwork of *M&M III-V* is nowhere in sight.

The developers seem to highlight the engine's sucktitude. Three temples feature "shapeshifters" and "wererats" but none of the damn things actually change shape. There are endless pirate attacks on Dagger Island and nearly 20 or more pirates who die automatically, only to be replaced with another 20 that magically appear out of thin air.

M&M VIII left me feeling blanded out, with a total lack of strategic challenge and RPG depth. Developers have repackaged the shittiness of *M&M VII* with dumbed-up gameplay, and kept it on an engine which makes *Tomb Raider* look like a tech demo.

*— **BARRY BRENESAL**'s first gaming review was of* M&M I

GRAPHICS A primitive first-person engine that features dull monsters, faceless people, and boring backdrops.

SOUND A good music track, but the repetitive comments of your team members can lead quickly to homicide.

DEPTH Quests are integrated with the story line, but it's basically a retread of *M&M I-VII*.

DESIGN Too many freebies. Who cares about spell purchases when you can buy everything in sight?

+ PLUSES

+ Intuitive interface
+ Well-balanced spells
+ Time-tested combat system
+ Distinctive dungeons

– MINUSES

- Badly dated graphics
- Poor animation
- Too many freebies make for boring gameplay

RATING 4

No live creatures were killed in the making of this game, though brain cells were murdered

PUBLISHER ···› Simon & Schuster Interactive
DEVELOPER ···› Cutler Creative
REQUIRED ···› P166, 32MB RAM, 8x CD ROM
IDEAL ···› PII 266, 64 MB RAM, 12 MB+ video card, time to waste

Last Call

You don't have to go home, but you can't stay here

Let's be clear: *Last Call* is a "2" title in terms of gameplay, and no more. But there is what we call a "product value" of at least "3" in anything that teaches one how to (a) mix drinks and (b) sharpen one's eye for the various personality types one may find to amuse, use, and/or abuse at any given bar. So, overall this game is a "2," but it's really a "3," ok?

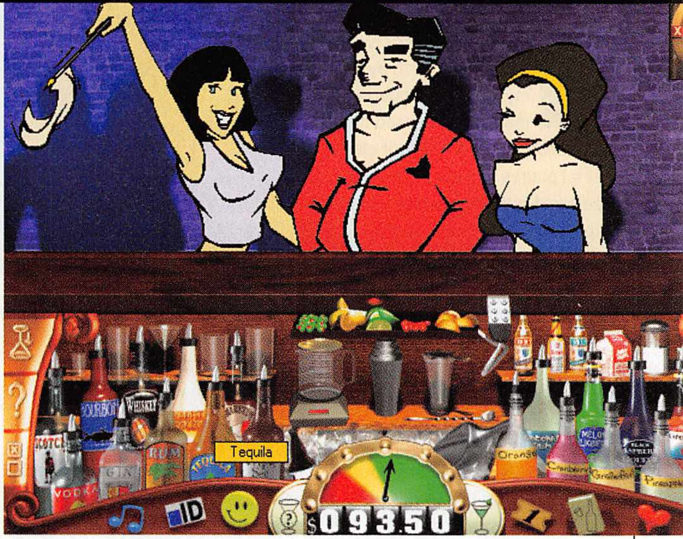
Last Call's interface presents would-be mixologists with a 'tender's-eye view of the business side of a typical bar. You've got different liquors, mixers, and various paraphernalia laid out in front of you. A large part of *Last Call*'s challenge is simply memorizing — with the dead-bang accuracy of a seasoned pro — where exactly the hell the Amaretto, Grapefruit Juice, and Bitters bottles are stored. Of course, a friendly help-text label pops up when your cursor hovers over anything, and that's okay for a rookie, but as pressures mount and impatient patrons begin to pile up, you won't have time for any hand-holding crap.

Ditto with the drink recipes themselves; you may not instinctively know what comprises a Screaming Orgasm now, but you can damn-sure know you'll have the recipe more-or-less memorized by the time you hit level three or four. *Last Call* gives players a fresh perspective on on the life of the bartender, all in the name of raking in the most tips. You'll have to keep numerous grumbling patrons' orders straight in your head, serve that one obtuse alcoholic who always orders the most complicated drink, and call in the bouncer to remove irritants.

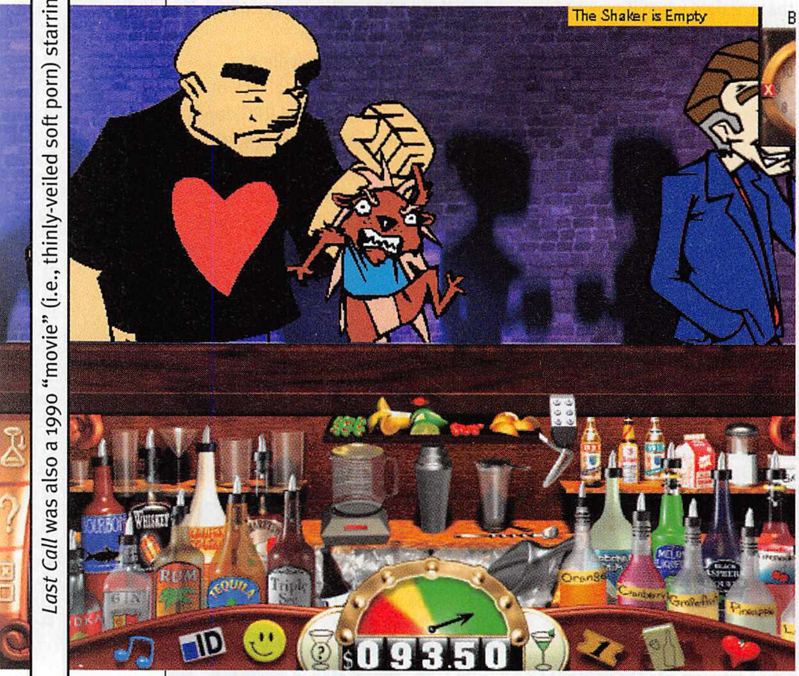
What remains of *Last Call*'s charm is in the cartoonish-but-not-for-kids presentation of the parade of characters. There's the goateed dweeb in the science-fiction T-shirt ("Yeah, I DID go to Klingon Camp! How'd you know?"), the Brit-inflected/bitchy/anorexic supermodel, and the never-forgettable dominatrix who rides up to the bar on an actual slave (and who, if you call the bouncer, kicks his ass). Flirt and give the occasional free-drink ticket and you'll hold off the ire of impatient customers and rake in bigger tips — if you're not making Mai Tai's out of scotch, beer, and two ounces of sugar, that is. Speed-mixing becomes important, and you may come to truly loathe the people always asking for complex, carefully-crafted drinks. The best part is, you can bounce 'em if you get frustrated.

Last Call is an interesting concept and has some great voice work, but there are little niggly problems. For a game scheme this simple and supposedly undemanding, *Last Call* sometimes aurally trips over itself. Patrons' comments overrun one another and force you to whip out the recipe book to hear what they ordered. Bouncing with impunity is fun, but could have served a more "strategic" element (instead, it's mostly a way of blowing off steam). Finally, *Last Call* is just a little too repetitive. This is what the term "desktop time-killer" was meant for. If you play this once or twice, you might not be a better person, but you will be a better patron.

— **CHRIS HUDAK** *has a greater respect for bartenders — but still doesn't buy this "last call" shit*



If the jogging-suited crooner whips off the bra, I'm outta here.



Clearly, this isn't really what we had in mind when we said "Bounce the Beaver."

ACCELE-RATED

There is a pixelicious software mode. This first release is jumpy on Voodoo boards (a patch is supposed to address this), but it'll work on any OpenGL card. S3TC compression support is included for Viper II owners.

PCXL MIXOLOGY

THE BLAIR WITCH

- One part vodka (the cheaper the better, such as Gilbey's or Winner's Cup)
- Three parts tomato-based spin-off drink (such as Clamato)
- Splash of gin (see "cheaper," above)
- Splash of Blair's Death Sauce (the "Blair" in the drink; for more info, go to www.deathsauce.com)

Add one garlic-stuffed olive. Use caution when mixing. Now yell at your friends a lot, stand in the corner, and drink up.

Last Call was also a 1990 "movie" (i.e., thinly-veiled soft porn) starring Shannon Tweed

GRAPHICS Simple and cartoonish, but sarcastic and world-weary. Nothing offensive here.

SOUND Stereotypical, but they're great stereotypes. Every bartender out there has heard this stuff.

DEPTH You're mixing drinks or stalling for time. Isn't the appreciation for alcohol enough?

DESIGN A genuinely useful, long-time-coming premise conveyed with *Tapper*-like reflexes.

PLUSES

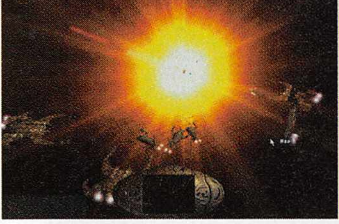
+ Real knowledge imparted
+ Bounce the bitchy supermodel!
+ Strong character sketches and presentation

MINUSES

- Repetitive too quickly
- Sound samples sometimes overrun each other
- Runs kinda quirky

RATING 3

BUILD AN EMPIRE -
ONE GALAXY AT A TIME.
"...one of the most detailed, in-depth, far reaching space conquest games ever."
- pc.ign.com
IMPERIUM GALACTICA II
ALLIANCES
imperiumgalactica.com



Endorsements For a New Millennium

Our plan for politically incorrect athlete endorsements

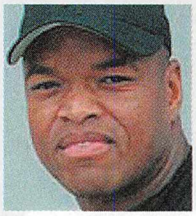
Now that Michael Jordan has hung up his endorsement sneakers to concentrate on the private business sector (i.e., serious gambling), ad agencies are worried where the hell they will find their quota of sports pitchmen. Although today's athlete doesn't have the "All-American" qualities of a Michael Jordan, we think that some creative campaigns could turn bad PR into great ad campaigns. Our selections ...

JOHN ROCKER

PITCHING FOR: KKK

THE CAMPAIGN: White is right, no matter how wrong it sounds.

WHY IT WORKS: KKK hasn't had a decent pitchman since David Duke and can always use a loudmouthed idiot to remind the rest of us just how incredibly shallow-minded and stupid some people are.

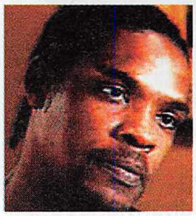


AL MARTIN

PITCHING FOR: Deadbeat Dads

THE CAMPAIGN: Sometimes it's best not to say, "I got it."

WHY IT WORKS: Pirates' outfielder is master of denial and could help other deadbeat dads come up with new and exciting ways to shirk responsibility.



LATRELL SPREWELL

PITCHING FOR: Nike

THE CAMPAIGN: Just Do It

WHY IT WORKS: Why should overpaid, crybaby athletes have to put up with some coach telling them to pass the ball? If you feel like strangling your boss — just do it!

FRANK GIFFORD

PITCHING FOR: American Society Of Divorce

THE CAMPAIGN: There are some things that CAN'T be worked out.

WHY IT WORKS: Who doesn't have sympathy for poor Frank? A good campaign and divorce rates across the country would skyrocket to new heights, which would result in even more divorcée women and we all know that they are "hot to trot."

MARV ALBERT

PITCHING FOR: Hair Club For Men

THE CAMPAIGN: Take a bite out of hair loss

WHY IT WORKS: We all know that's a rug, Marv. Who the hell do you think your're kidding, dude? Admit it, join Sigh Sperling and transplant some natural-looking hair on that insane head of yours.

SHAWN BRADLEY

PITCHING FOR: Budweiser

THE CAMPAIGN: Wass waaaaay uuuupp?

WHY IT WORKS: Just seeing this tall geeky white boy attemping to say "Wassup?" would be cause for instant hilarity. Besides, Bud could hit that all important "seven feet and over" market they've been missing.

J.R. RIDER

PITCHING FOR: Ryder Moving Trucks

THE CAMPAIGN: You never know when you'll wear out your welcome

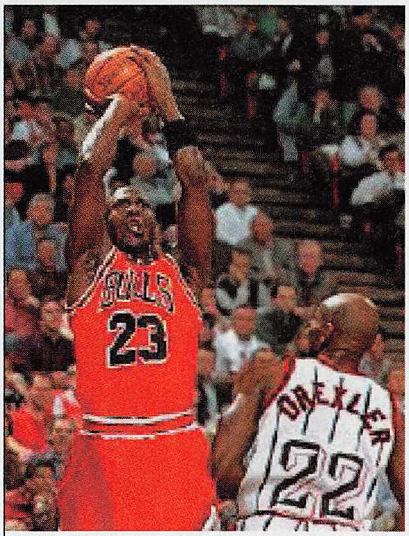
WHY IT WORKS: His name, obviously. That, and the fact that J.R. can't seem to stay in one town long enough to establish residence before the entire city tires of his childish antics.

ALBERT BELLE

PITCHING FOR: Taco Bell

THE CAMPAIGN: No comment

WHY IT WORKS: He'd be just like the Taco Bell chihauaha, but really, really mean and foul tempered. The kids would just love his zany attitude.



"His Airness" has formally announced that he will no longer be involved in endorsements. Apparently his commitment to serious gambling on the golf course is extreme.

CEO STRATEGY GUIDES

When you open the box of *Sammy Sosa High Heat Baseball 2001* (and you will, if you even give a crap about baseball) you'll find a free strategy guide. What's amazing is that this strategy guide is that it was written by the multi-millionaire CEO of 3DO. (Usually these things are written by pimply kids who earn about $1.25 an hour — if they're lucky.) There is still some question as to whether Trip actually "wrote" the strategy guide or just lent his signature and picture to the project. We'll assume he did it himself, and now we await the next line of CEO strategy guides ...

TODD PORTER'S DUMMY'S GUIDE TO LOOKING LIKE A COMPLETE ASS
INSIDE: Todd shares his infinite lack of wisdom, morals, and talent in this tell-all book about Ion Storm and how not to run a business

BILL GATE'S GUIDE TO MAKING INTERNET EXPLORER YOUR DEFAULT BROWSER (as if you had a choice, muhahahaha!)
INSIDE: Bill shares nothing that he hasn't already stolen, but you have to buy the book in order for your brain to operate properly

GREG FISHBACK'S HOW TO MAKE A BAD LICENSE INTO AN EVEN WORSE GAME
INSIDE: Acclaim CEO Greg Fishback talks about *Fantastic Four*, *Spawn*, *Batman*, and other licenses his company has forever soiled

When Albert Belle first came into the Major Leagues his name was Joey Belle — he was still a head case

DEVELOPER ···› Studio 33
PUBLISHER ···› Psygnosis
REQUIRED ···› P166 (233 to run multi-player), 32MB RAM, 85MB hard drive, 4X CD-ROM, 4MG video card, D3D-compatible 16-bit sound card
IDEAL ···› P233, 64 MB RAM, 85MB hard drive, 8X CD-ROM, 8MG video card, gamepad or steering wheel controller

Formula One 99

Kinda like a stripper: Heavy on the looks but disengaged

ACCELE-RATED

On an Athlon 700 with a TNT2 Ultra board, *Formula One 99* runs like a champ. It even runs well on an AMD K6-3 with dual-Voodoo II's. Good looking and fast.

Really great racing games have been few on the PC — especially Formula 1-based racing games. Even the Formula One games that are worth playing are pretty average. Prime examples: *Newman/Haas Racing* and *F1 Racing Simulation*. Both lacked the depth and replayability that make other racing games such as *Grand Prix Legends* and the *NASCAR* series so great. Psygnosis, long known for their *Wipeout* games on the PlayStation, have also dabbled in the fine art of Formula One racing. Although their first effort (back in '97) looked good, gameplay was extremely repetitive. You could call it a tech demo for D3D and 3Dfx. Unfortunately, with *Formula One 99*, Psygnosis' latest offering, the sad tradition continues.

F1 99 is an officially licensed product of the FIA Formula One World Championship, and comes complete with all the teams from the 1998 season including McLaren, Ferrari, Williams, and Jordan. The game includes all the drivers from the 1998 season, including Damon Hill, Michael Schumacher, Ricardo Zonta, and the 1998 World Champion Mika Hakkinen. (These racers may not be "trailer" hold names like Jeff Gordon and Bobby Labonte, but they still manage to sleep with numerous European women.) All the tracks from the various circuits are here, including Monaco, Silverstone, Montreal, and the Sepang F1 circuit in Malaysia.

Unfortunately, *F1 99* only has two gaming modes, Quick Race and Grand Prix. There are practice modes and set-up screens where players can change weather conditions, tire wear, braking assistance, etc. But what about a custom car feature? Or a competitive ladder system? A career mode? Internet play? Sorry folks, there's nothing here but the same typical gameplay and options .

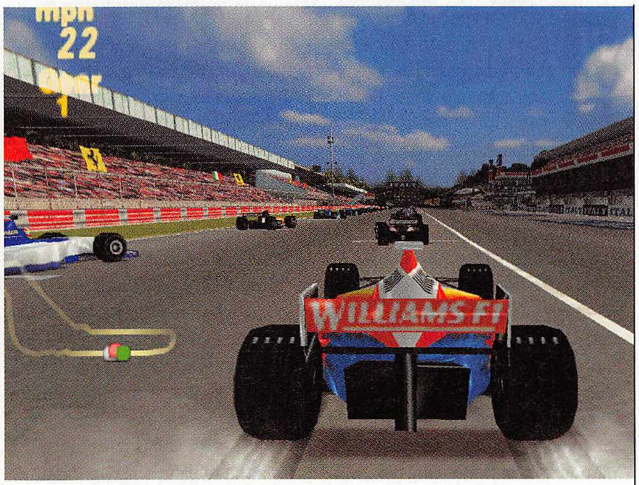
The graphics are the game's only saving grace. Even at 1024X780, the game looks pretty spectacular, with little pop-up or clipping. Each car is well represented, complete with accurate logos and markings. The circuits look sharp as well. Other special effects such as rain, dynamic lighting, skid marks, and smoke from tires make *F1 99* the best-looking Formula One game to date.

However, control issues continue to plague the franchise. The game supports force-feedback steering wheels, but the control is extremely twitchy. This is due to the lack of a Dead Zone adjustment in the set-up screen. Sadly, you are better off with a gamepad. The Microsoft Sidewinder works perfectly fine and if you can't win races with it, you're a loser.

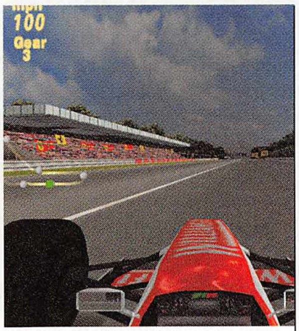
Psygnosis declares *F1 99* a true racing simulation, but we soon discovered it's anything but. For example, suppose you're racing at say 125 MPH and ram yourself into the wall. In real life you'd obviously be DOA, your body parts splattered all over the track and your car would be toast. Not here, folks. You hit the wall and magically bounce off. Is that real Formula One racing?

So if you're looking for a quickie (the game kind) and enjoy Formula One racing, you may want to give this game a try. It's quick, it's fast, and it doesn't suck.

*—**TOM HAMM** has raced real Formula One cars with Paul Newman at Laguna Seca Raceway*



Boy, you're cool ... I wish I could squeal my tires like that!



Extra points for running the French guy off the track!

That logo reminds me I just paid two frickin dollars for a gallon of gas. Screw you!

GRAPHICS Dramatic improvement over last year's game, with incredible detail on just about everything.

SOUND Sounds pretty typical and the announcer (the official voice of Formula 1) can get annoying.

CONTROL This is definitely a pick-it-up-and-play-it-before-you-go-out game. Easy to pick up and put down.

REALISM Not very flashy, pretty straightforward. Even experts (like us) could mistake it for last year's game.

PLUSES

+ Fluid framerates
+ Tight control with gamepad
+ Challenging computer opponents

MINUSES

- Lame front end
- Commentary can get annoying (you can only listen to Brits for so long — sorry Rob)

RATING 5

What's the difference between Formula One and Indy Car? Eurotrash

DEVELOPER ···›	EA Sports
PUBLISHER ···›	EA Sports
REQUIRED ···›	P233, 32MB RAM, 300MB hard drive, 4X CD-ROM, 2MB video card
IDEAL ···›	PII 450, 128MB RAM, 300MB hard drive, 32MB GeForce-based card

Superbike 2000

They're very hot, fast, and they vibrate between your legs

ACCELE-RATED

This sucker looks so good you might enjoy it even if you don't like racing games. Half the fun is crashing into things. Pain (rendered well) equals great game design.

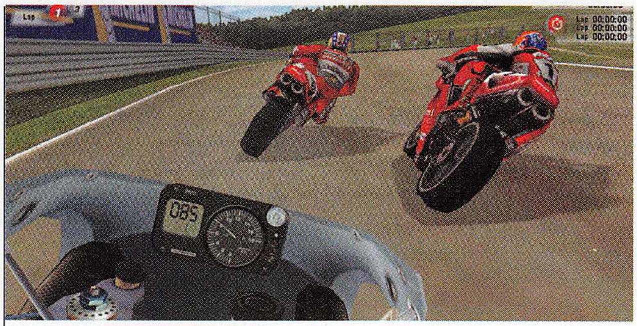
It takes a special breed of man to hop onto a supercharged motorcycle and race at breakneck speeds over asphalt ovals and wicked hairpins. This breed is general described as "f—king insane." That said, there are still a lot of us who wish we had the cajones, or the luck, to do it for a living (and if we could be guaranteed we wouldn't crush our aforementioned cajones). EA's *Superbike 2000* quite realistically lets you do just that, road rash not included.

Superbike isn't some arcade-like wannabe racer, it's a bonafide simulation — one that racing fans will enjoy a lot more than action junkies. But it isn't as good as it could be, mostly due to a conservative streak on EA's part. Take the previous incarnation, *Superbike World Championship*, spruce up the graphics, expand the licenses, and guess what? You're playing *Superbike 2000*. And really, is this such a bad thing?

The game features licensed tracks from the Federation Internationale de l'Automobile (Frog for "We want our testicles smashed," we assume) as well as a handful of gorgeous licensed bikes and a slew of real-world Euro bikers you haven't likely heard of. In all, there are 13 real-world tracks and six bikes. Everything is tweakable, from the realism down to the rider's skill levels, with variable track conditions, weather, physics, and even a good amount of grease monkey-ing, if that's your bag.

The sound is mediocre, with good engine sounds, but little to no roar from the crowd. The commentator sounds a lot like Eric Idle, except not as funny. (Then again, Eric Idle hasn't really been funny for some time.)

For most people, the beautiful, almost photo-realistic graphics are what will sell them on this game. Riders, bikes, and spectacular wipeouts are beautifully animated.



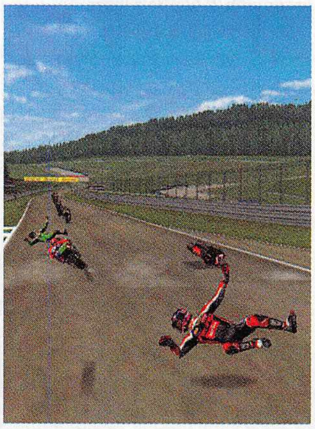
"Yeah? Same to you buddy!"

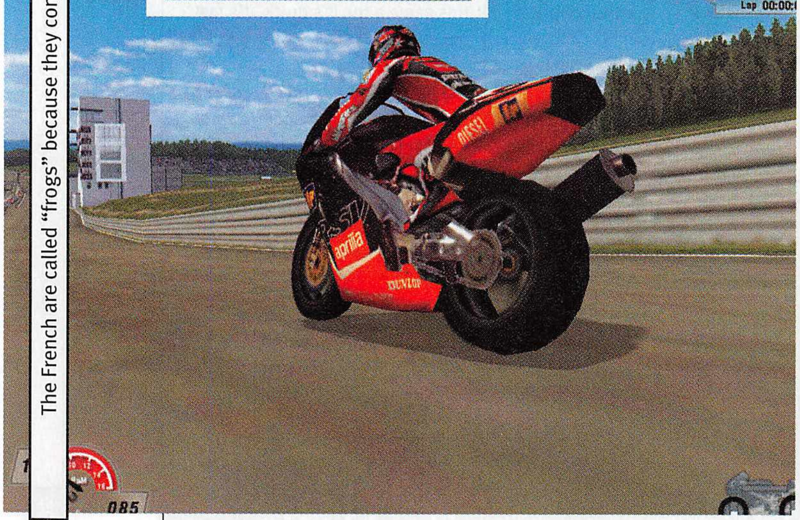
It is quite worthwhile to sneak up behind a pack of bikes and wipe them out, just so you can play with the camera. (It's a sickness, I know.) Another element of realism the graphics provide is a totally convincing sense of speed, which almost makes up for the insanely difficult ... uhh ... difficulty.

Overall, the game does an excellent job modeling high-speed motorcycling. And hence, despite excellent controls and interface, it's a damn hard and frustrating sim to the non-hardcore gamer. Knocking the physics down will solve some problems and the game does offer a wide range of auto-assists and difficulty levels from which to choose.

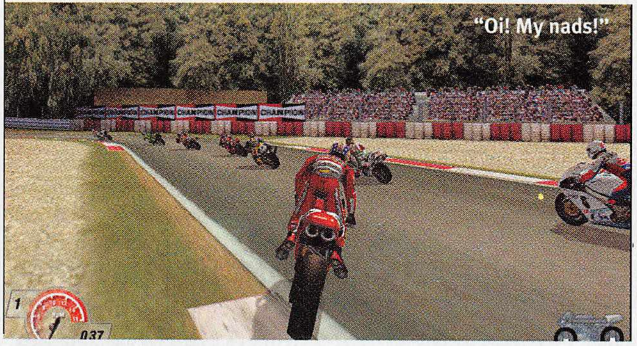
Superbike also features a split-screen two-player mode, as well as network and TCP/IP play. A matchmaking service would be great, however, as this game would be a natural place for a sim-head to hang out. You want *Grand Prix Legends* with bikes? It's in this game.

— **ANDREW S. BUB** *doesn't want a pickle, he just wants to ride on his motor-sickle*





This is the last time our fearless driver had skin over his bones.



"Oi! My nads!"

GRAPHICS Gorgeous and well-animated with a brilliant sense of speed. The best looking game on two wheels.

SOUND The loud whining noises mixed with basso rumbles you'd expect from superbikes. Zzzzz.

CONTROL Action fans need not apply — this is a simulation. It simulates stuff, so it's kinda hard.

REALISM A mere upgrade from last year's model with even better graphics and more violent crashes.

+ PLUSES

- + Licensed bikes and riders
- + Excellent AI, graphics and solid design
- + Mangling superbikers is fun!

— MINUSES

- – Nothing blows up
- – Tough, hard and frustrating
- – Realistic
- – Doesn't feature midgets or porn

RATING 7

The French are called "frogs" because they consider frogs to be cuisine — we think

DEVELOPER ···› 3DO
PUBLISHER ···› 3DO
REQUIRED ···› 200MHz, 32MB RAM, 110MB hard drive, 4X CD-ROM, 2MB video card
IDEAL ···› 500MHz, 128MB RAM, 250MB hard drive, 32MB GeForce card

Sammy Sosa's High Heat Baseball 2001

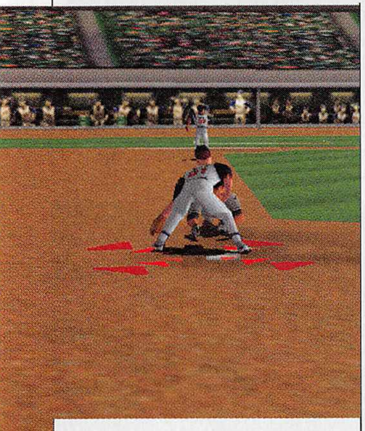
The best baseball game ever made — period

ACCELE-RATED

High Heat isn't going to set your 3D card on fire, but the game plays extremely fast at high resolutions on any second generation or beyond 3D card. GeForce is the best bet.

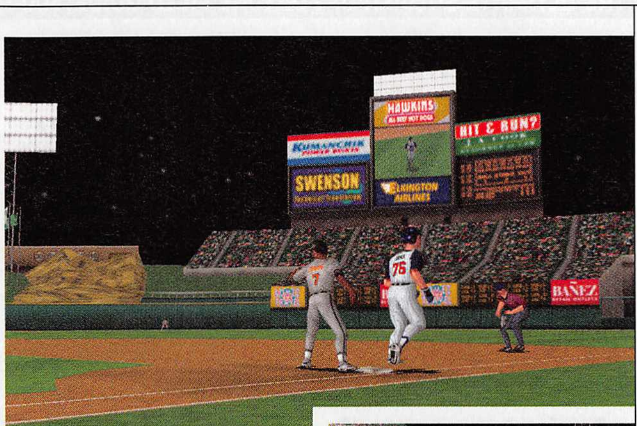
There are people who play sports games and then there are the rest of you people who just don't "get it." I'm assuming that since you are reading this review that you "get it." If you've been playing sports games as long as I have, then you've had to deal with the same collection of crap baseball games throughout the years. That time is over.

As a baseball purist and a gamer, it has been nearly impossible to find any one game that satisfied all of my baseball gaming needs. There was *Baseball* for the Intellivision, but at that time just getting nine pixelicious player-representing blobs onscreen was a major accomplishment. *RBI Baseball* introduced the fly ball and real players to the NES. *Tony LaRussa Baseball* was the best at utilizing fielding ratings, while *World Series Baseball* brought playability and the little mistakes of baseball into 3D on the Saturn. *Earl Weaver Baseball* for the PC is still the game that defines what a simulation should be. Yet until *Sammy Sosa High Heat Baseball 2001*, never once has any baseball game managed to combine all of the above into a fun game that can be enjoyed on many different levels.

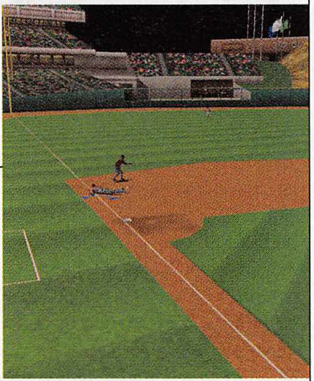

Old fat guys shouldn't steal bases (you hear me Will?).

Looking for a fast-paced and fun game? No problem. *High Heat* is simple to pick up and play for any level of player and the dead-on controls and precise gameplay make for a brilliant head-to-head game. The key to this is the brilliant pitcher/batter interface. After playing for a while, you can actually tell when a pitcher hangs a curveball and you can turn on it to try lifting it over the green monster. When you really get used to the game you can actually foul off tough pitches until the pitcher eventually lays one into your sweet spot — then smack it.

How about 162 games against a balanced, yet challenging computer opponent? Check. Never before has a baseball game been so adept at finding a difficulty level for everybody. When you find the level that is right for you (and there is one, trust me) you'll go through the rigors of a real MLB season. You'll experience winning streaks, slumps, bad runs, and all the ups and downs that make a full season such a joy (or misery if you are an Orioles fan, like myself.)



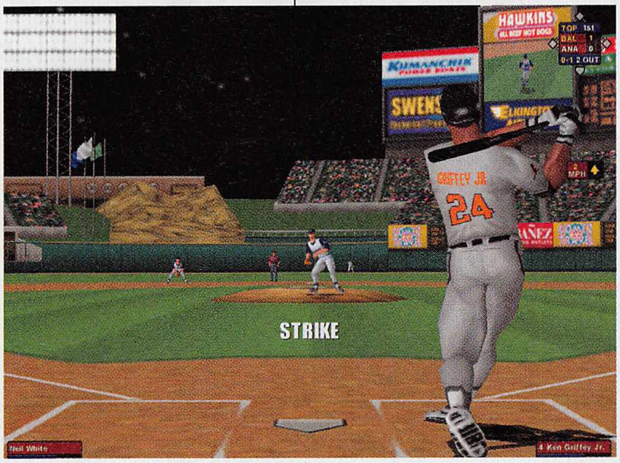
Precise fielding control makes for a great two-player game.



Got two thumbs and no interest in button-mashing your way through a nine-inning game, but you'd love to take over as GM? No problem. You manage A, AA, and AAA ball, the DL, and your major league roster. Dump aging veterans for talented minor leaguers. Change the complexion of your team by becoming a speed, defense, pitching ballclub. Hey, and if you eventually want to give this whole "playing" thing a shot, you can always jump onto the field with your reworked roster.

As with any sports game, *High Heat* isn't perfect. The pitches don't all move properly, the hits can get repetitive, the player models are average at best, and the Orioles still suck. However, I have never seen or played a baseball game that got so many things right. As a baseball fan and as a gamer, I am finally pleased.

— **MIKE SALMON** *is not related to Tim Salmon, but still calls him for money sometimes*



We tend to think that Griffey looks damn good in an Orioles uniform.

GRAPHICS Good, but not great. The player faces and bodies could use personalization, but it's good enough.

SOUND The bat cracks, the glove pops, the crowd cheers. However, the announcer is pretty damn annoying.

CONTROL The deepest baseball game ever. It combines great arcade play and extreme statistical accuracy.

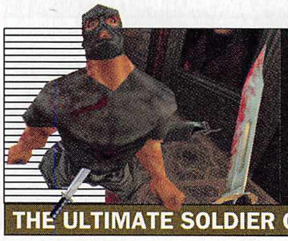
REALISM Other than a few minor flaws, this game is perfectly designed for baseball fanatics.

PLUSES
+ Pitcher/batter interface is THE BEST EVER
+ Fielding is easy and intuitive
+ Great single, multi, and sim game

MINUSES
– Fat players look muscular
– Announcer has bad voice and says stupid things
– Occasional bugs ruin perfection

RATING 9

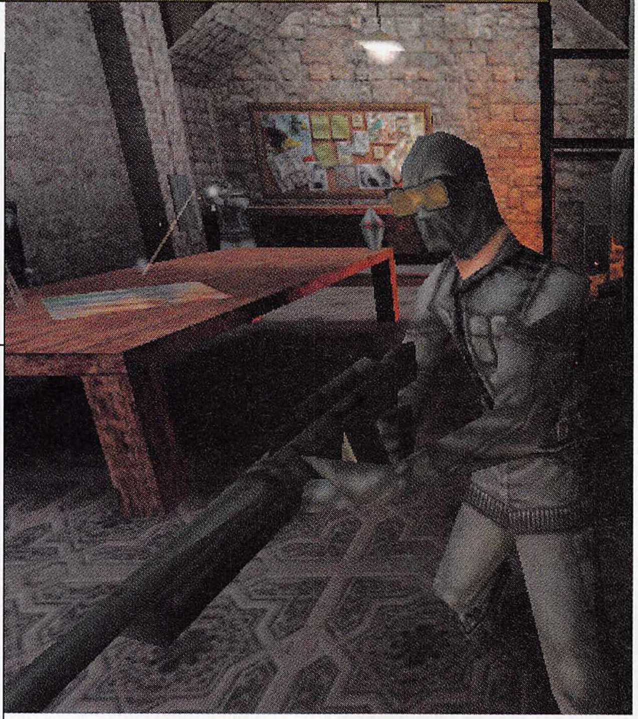
Tim Salmon has a brother named Mike Salmon — he played DB for the 49ers and is far better looking



KILL 'EM ALL

THE ULTIMATE SOLDIER OF FORTUNE FIELD GUIDE; HAPPINESS IS A WARM GUN ... AND A PILE OF MONEY

Being a soldier of fortune means eating steel and pissing nails — being a hard-hearted man that can waste a scumbag at a moment's notice. John Mullins is such a man, having been decorated in the Army and later used for "consulting." You pukes must be blessed by the baby Jesus to get the chance to step into this man's boots. What you are about to read is classified level information regarding the use of the weapons and tactics of a soldier of fortune. These guides will stop you from embarrassing yourself in the field. Remember soldiers, this information is to be used only for good, not evil (unless, of course, evil is offering a bigger chunk of change.)



When a man's goggles are filled with cow urine, it's hard to aim.

LESSON ONE

Equipping yourself

"AN OUNCE OF PREVENTION IS WORTH A POUND OF C4"

FACT ···> In most missions, you will be encountering enemies who are usually more heavily armed than you are.
RESPONSE ···> Those bitches are holding your weapons. When starting missions, only equip yourself with what you need to do a repo-man on them.

FACT ···> Grenades, C4, and armor are plentiful on most levels.
RESPONSE ···> Start off with the IR goggles, medikits, and flash grenades — drive through to get the rest. Always check crates for items — that's where terrorists like to keep 'em, you know.

FACT ···> The Microwave Pulse Gun is basically useless.
RESPONSE ···> Open up with the Heavy Machinegun, Sniper Rifle, or SMG, so you'll actually be able to kill your enemies.

SOLDIER OF FORTUNE ARMORY

Know your weapon! There is nothing worse than getting into some heavy action, only to realize you're gripping the wrong tool. Study this chart — know its contents and you will never feel the unfortunate sensation of having something useless in your hand.

WEAPON	DAMAGE	VS. ARMOR	SPLASH DAMAGE	SPECIAL
Knife Slash	22 pts	x1/4, 0	Attacking from behind does x2.5 damage	
Thrown Knife	30 pts	0	0	0
9mm Pistol	45 pts	0	0	0
.44 Pistol	120 pts	x2	0	Can Sever Limbs
Shotgun	12 pellets fired 10 pts each	x1/5 vs armor	0	Forward Blast (40 pts, x1/2 vs armor) and Can Sever Limbs
SMG	45 pts	0	0	0
Silenced SMG	30 pts	x1/2	0	0
Sniper	80 pts	x2	0	0
Slug Thrower	100 pts	0	60 pts with radius of 80 units direct hit	Can Sever Limbs
Slug Altfire	0	0	60 pts with radius of 210 units	x1/2 damage to self
Rocket	250 pts	0	225 pts with radius of 175 units	Can Gib
Rocket Altfire	8 mini-rockets x 150 pts	0	200 pts with radius of 150 units	Can Gib
Flamegun	160 pts per second in MP (100 pts per second in SP)	0	0	0
Flamegun Altfire	0	0	300 pts with radius of 150	residual burning damage, Can Gib
MPG Main	10 pts	0	0	ignores armor
MPG Altfire	200 pts	0	0	ignores armor, Gibs in a special way
Heavy Machinegun	100 pts	x1.3	0	Can Sever Limbs
Phosphorous Grenade	0	0	75 pts with radius of 120 units	
Grenade	0	0	200 pts with radius of 200 units	Can Gib
Flash Grenade	0	0	20 pts with radius of 100 units	Blinds
C4	0	0	250 pts with radius of 200 units	Can Gib

Remember! When hit, armor is subtracted until it is depleted; then it's bye-bye health.

John Mullins is one tough hombre, but he's also responsible for the awful SOF TV show

LESSON TWO

The Approach

"WHAT THEY CAN'T SEE, THEY *REALLY* WON'T BE ABLE TO SEE AFTER YOU BLOW THEIR HEAD OFF"

FACT ···> You will constantly meet sentries and guards who will sound the alarm and bring the whole circus down on you.
RESPONSE ···> Go slowly and always lean around corners before you put yourself in harm's way. Always plug the guy in the watchtower, near the alarm switch, or standing guard first, and then take out wandering patrols. The less you are seen by your opponents, the less ammo you waste, and the less hits you'll take.

FACT ···> In *SOF*, 99% of the time, it's a trap.
RESPONSE ···> Always assume there is someone in your blind spot (usually with a big hard-on to put a bullet in your brainpan). If you see someone to your right, there's probably someone to your left. If you go down a dead end, you're guaranteed to meet with resistance on the way back. That empty room you're about to enter? Trust me, it ain't empty.

SKILLS TO PAY THE BILLS

Depending on what kind of hombre you think you are, you'll be picking one of these difficulty levels. If you want to play a particular difficulty, but don't like something about it — choose "custom" and modify the settings. Don't forget, though, the higher the difficulty, the more money you make.

DIFFICULTY	NO. OF SAVES	ENCUMBRANCE	SPAWN FREQ.	ENEMY TOUGHNESS	CHEATS
EFFORTLESS	Unlimited	No limits	None	Non-Threatening	Yes
EASY	8	10	Light	Uncertain	Yes
MEDIUM	5	7	Standard	Standard	No
CHALLENGING	2	5	Heavy	Bloodthirsty	No
UNFAIR	None	5	Ridiculous	Aggressive	No

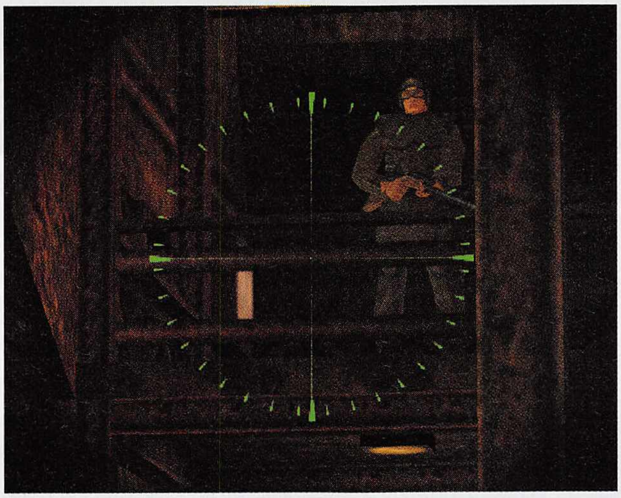
FACT ···> If your weapons aren't loaded, the bullets might as well be in your head.
RESPONSE ···> At every available opportunity, reload your gun. This is easy to forget if you only use a weapon for a moment. Just sniped someone? Reload. Just used the .44 to take down an armored guard? Reload. Never ever go into any unknown area without checking your load status. All of your weapons should have full loads, even if you aren't using them.

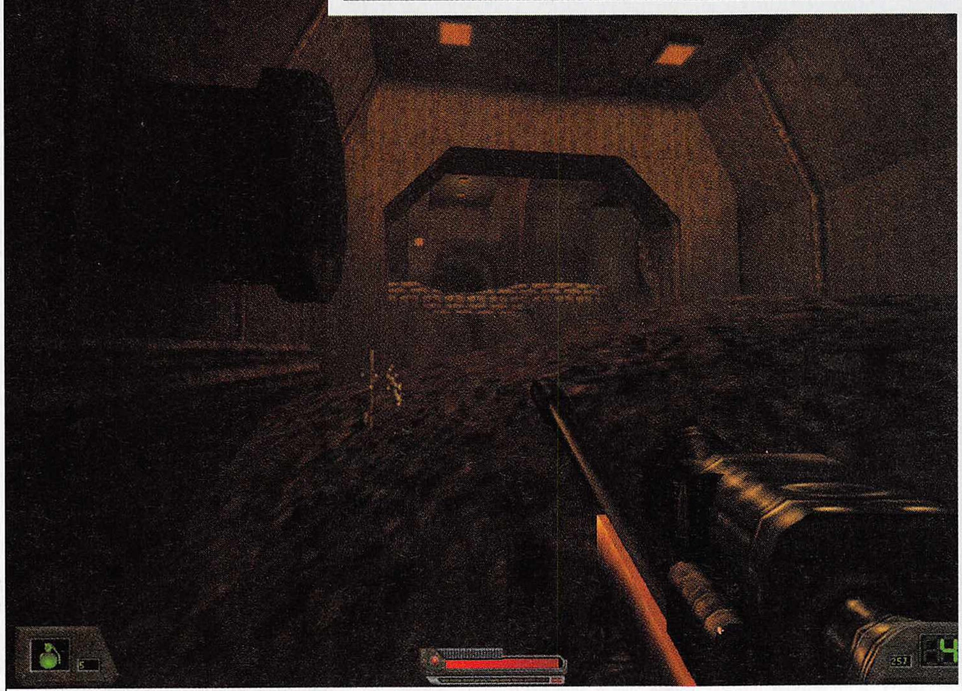
ENEMY TOUGHNESS

What Does Enemy Toughness mean? It changes the variable of how much damage the enemy is dishing out.

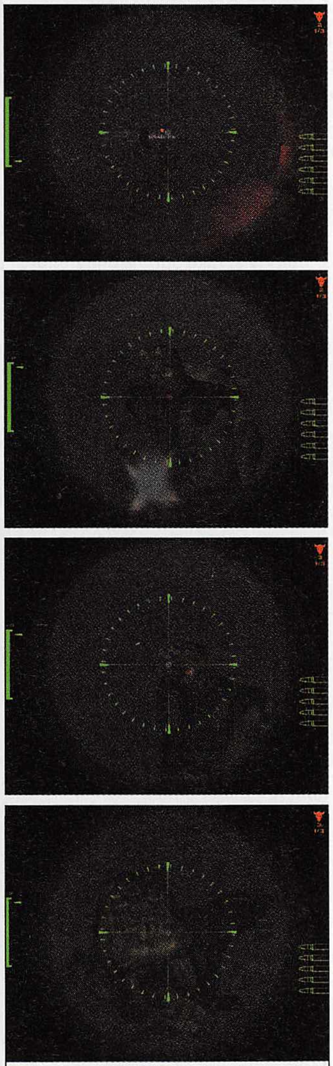
ENEMY TOUGHNESS

Non-Threatening	x.15
Uncertain	x.3
Standard	x.4
Aggressive	x.6
Blood-Thirsty	x1.0





No *visible* enemies and no cover. What you have here is called a "deathtrap."



The sniper rifle — just another way to pratice dentistry, 12th century style.

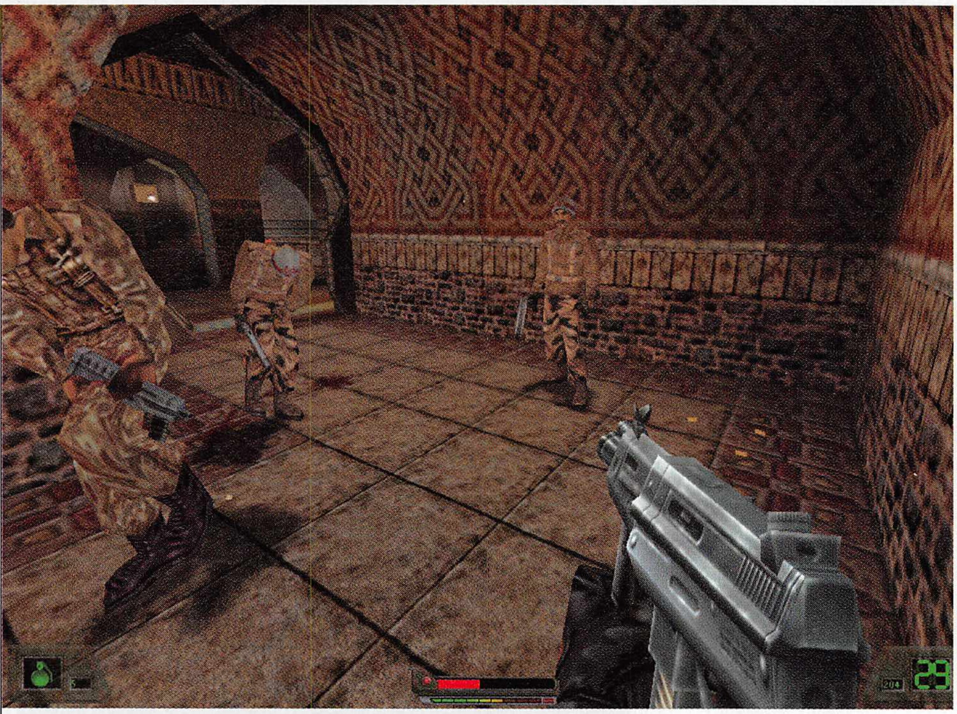
If outnumbered in a real fight, seriously hurt one guy — his screaming will scare the rest off

LESSON THREE

Time to Tango

"10 TO 1 ODDS? THAT'S HARDLY SPORTING —THEY DON'T STAND A CHANCE."

FACT ···> You will be assaulted by overwhelming numbers.
RESPONSE ···> Remember that you are a well-trained killing machine and that you were born to kill chumps. These guys are chumps. It's also important to note that wounded bitches are too busy screaming in pain to attack you. Finally, don't forget that enemies will likely not shoot at you if there's someone in the way. Combine these tips when you are faced with many enemies — quickly shoot each enemy once to wound them, then position yourself behind the wounded. For instance, if you are faced with three enemies and you shoot each of them once, you will probably end up with only one of them unwounded (and still firing at you). That means you only have one guy firing at you instead of three. If you use the wounded as shields, and work quickly to take out the unhurt guy, you'll be able to finish off the other two without any danger.



Trust me, a guy who's got bullets in his damn leg ain't gonna be shooting anything but heroin.

FACT ···> The enemy is usually near-sighted.
RESPONSE ···> Stay far away whenever possible. The further away you are, the less hits you'll take, and the easier it will be to take them out with calm, collected shots.

FACT ···> If they die with an empty gun, they drop an empty gun.
RESPONSE ···> Whenever possible, let the enemy shoot at you (while you're behind cover) until they're out of ammo. Watch them reload, then kill them, so you can pick up a full load of ammo. Of course, this is only for experts.

Who needs armor when you can stay away from the wall-eyed enemies and plug 'em from a distance.

HUH? WHAT THE ... ?

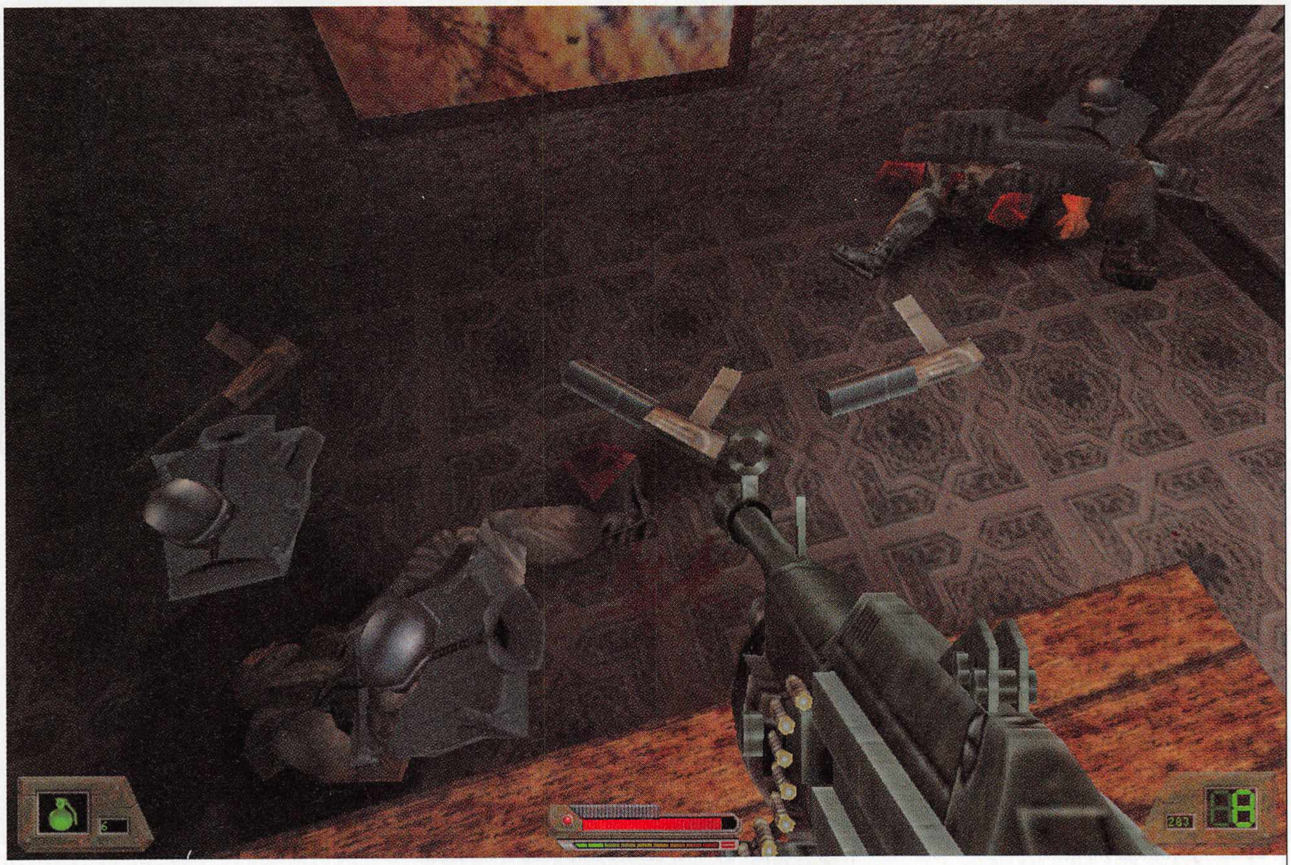
Raven Studios discusses the effect of the sound meter in the Single Player game:

"The sound meter forces players to play more stealthily by punishing noisy players with a flood of enemies. The more noise generated by both the enemies and the player, the higher the bar climbs. Once the bar has maxed out, the player will be rushed by a number of irate folks from all directions. There are two main factors that influence the rate at which the bar climbs: Difficulty level and the level itself.

For example, players have to be much more stealthy in the Kosovo military air base than they do in the war-torn Kosovo streets. So, some of the levels are geared more to stealth while others are geared to all-out combat. The other factor is difficulty level; on effortless, easy, and medium, this element of the game really isn't played up too much - players really have to go out of their way to make too much noise and trip the alarm.

On the two higher difficulty levels, however, this element of the game is played up much more. Being stealthy and quiet is essential on Challenging. Leaning around corners is also important. On unfair, on the other hand, the sound system is ridiculously sensitive - making any noise whatsoever will trigger it, so the player basically has to resign himself to being attacked from all sides and has to run forward guns blazing. It's completely unfair. I don't know if it's actually possible to complete the game on unfair."

Based on the state of his game, Matt thinks his life is set on "difficult"



When in need of new equipment, just blast enemies. It's just like being in a shopping mall ... after you've shot everyone that works there.

LESSON FOUR

Mop-Up

"IT'S MULLINS TIME!"

FACT ···> Dropped weapons are the only things that disappear.
RESPONSE ···> After all enemies are cleared out, consider what you want to bring with you. If there are a lot of Suppressed SMG's lying around and you are almost out of 5.56 rounds for your Heavy MG, you might want to drop the Heavy and pick up the SMG, because you'll have more ammo available. Do not get emotional about your weapons — get rid of them when they serve no purpose. Don't waste a whole suit of armor just to fill the tiny slice of damage you have on your current armor bar. Leave it there and come back for it when you need it more.

FACT ···> Cleared areas are not clear. Ever.
RESPONSE ···> Not only do enemies respawn (depending on difficulty level), but reinforcements frequently repopulate the areas you just left. Never assume that an area is clear, because usually it isn't.

FACT ···> Once you complete the mission, you are completely healed and all your equipment is forever lost.
RESPONSE ···> After the first few missions, you will get a feel for when you are near the end of said mission. Get accustomed to being really liberal with your ammo supply and using healthpacks and grenades, since they are all going to be zeroed after the mission anyway. Kick ass!

SOLDIERS OF PC ACCELERATOR

MATT HOLMES
SKIN ···> Punk
WHY ···> He loves wearing hot leather
HOW TO KILL HIM ···> Just wait, he'll suicide

MIKE SALMON
SKIN ···> Hawk
WHY ···> He's actually black in real life
HOW TO KILL HIM ···> Mention Donna D.

GARRETT KENYON
SKIN ···> Punk Chick
WHY ···> He loves hot boobies all jigglin'
HOW TO KILL HIM ···> Talk about PCXL

JASON "THE MULE"
SKIN ···> Ninja
WHY ···> He's #149320 guy in the industry
HOW TO KILL HIM ···> Stab with Devil Fork

GIA DECARLO
SKIN ···> Latex Chick
WHY ···> Ask her about it in private
HOW TO KILL HER ···> Wear clashing shoes

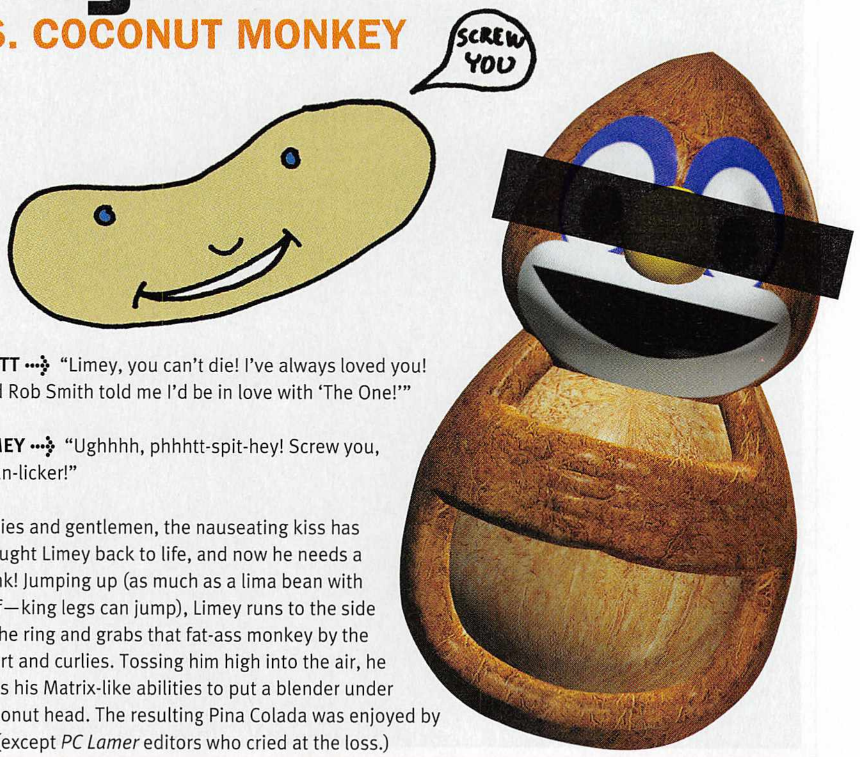
CHUCK OSBORNE
SKIN ···> Full Metal J.
WHY ···> He's a bad ass motherf—ker
HOW TO KILL HIM ···> You can't

ERIC SMITH
SKIN ···> Sabre
WHY ···> He's gone tattoo crazy
HOW TO KILL HIM ···> Find his sniping hole

5.56 mm rounds are fired at 3,000 feet per second. Overkill? We don't think so

PCXL Fight Night

FIGHT NIGHT – LIMEY VS. COCONUT MONKEY



Remember when you were young, and sometimes, late at night you'd look out the window and see a pale, grinning face leering at you? Its glowing eyes would shriek "I saw what you did!" and you'd grab your crotch and cry. That was *PC Gamer*'s freak-on-a-leash Coconut Monkey — and it's time he got his. To that end, we enlisted our own demon of devastation, Limey the Wisecrackin' Lima Bean, to set that punk-ass straight once and for all.

ROUND 1

Smack

COCONUT MONKEY → "I am not knowing why the little bean is having problem with me. I was simply working on my new game, very busy, and then the challenge comes on the telephone. Now I must deliver the beaten down on the little bean creature!"

LIMEY → "Screw that fat f—k!"

EDGE → No clear winner

ROUND 2

The Fight

COCONUT MONKEY → Enraged by Limey's rudeness, he hopped right into the ring and smushed Limey with his rotund bottom. Spinning left and right, his signature move "The sit and spin" put the hurt on Limey.

LIMEY → "OI! You think that hurts? UrGhhh!! Me old man popped me in the mush worse'n that plenty 'o times! Arrgghhhh!"

EDGE → Despite being shaped like a fat dwarve's penis and having no hands, his attack appeared to crush the life from invective-spewing Limey.

ROUND 3

The Matrix

COCONUT MONKEY → Pleased with his victory, he turned his back on the flattened Limey and began to leave the ring. "Now I must be going back to work," he said.

LIMEY → (Is dead.)

EDGE → It looks like Coconut Monkey ... wait! Who's that? My God, it's Matt Holmes! It appears he's, oh my God, he's kissing Limey! Get a mic in there, what's he saying?

MATT → "Limey, you can't die! I've always loved you! And Rob Smith told me I'd be in love with 'The One!'"

LIMEY → "Ughhhh, phhhtt-spit-hey! Screw you, bean-licker!"

Ladies and gentlemen, the nauseating kiss has brought Limey back to life, and now he needs a drink! Jumping up (as much as a lima bean with no f—king legs can jump), Limey runs to the side of the ring and grabs that fat-ass monkey by the short and curlies. Tossing him high into the air, he uses his Matrix-like abilities to put a blender under Coconut head. The resulting Pina Colada was enjoyed by all (except *PC Lamer* editors who cried at the loss.)

ONLINE NUISANCE

Games are supposed to be all about having fun. Unfortunately there are some people out there who seem to forget how to have fun in a game. Fortunately, there are people like us in the world to help them remember what fun is — or at least get some cheap laughs at their expense. This month, our targets are Trekkies, or Trekkers (for you frickin' geeks out there) ...

STAR TREK ARMADA

RACE WILL MAKE ALL THE DIFFERENCE IN ANNOYING PEOPLE IN ARMADA.

IF YOU PICK KLINGON → Never surrender. Make as many cloaked ships as possible, then destroy your base, cloak all your ships and hide them in the corners. While he is attempting to find you, yell at him through the chat in Klingon, calling him a "pathak,", coward, and saying that he should stop hiding from your fleet and die with honor. If he never finds you and quits, quickly get into chat and call him an honorless Ferengi dog. Then, tell everyone in the chat how you couldn't hunt the coward down, and how they should all sing songs to your great battle.

BORG → Constantly spam the chat and any games with the "Resistance is Futile, we are the Borg" line over and over again. Anytime someone tells you to shut up, tell them "You will comply."

THE FEDERATION → Constantly chat with the enemy, telling them you want to come to a diplomatic resolution to the problem. Say that you don't want to fight and you hope you can be his friend. If he attacks, ask him to please stop. Say that you didn't attack him and that you want a peaceful resolution. If you lose a ship, scream out how he just killed Data or some other ST character. After the first 30 minutes of the game, accuse him of not being friendly and quit the game, making all that time he's been building up his side completely useless.

ROMULAN → Don't play Romulans — there's nothing funny you can do with those stiffies.

STAR TREK VOYAGER: ELITE FORCE

STAR TREK PICKUP LINES → Go into multiplayer and pick out someone using a "7 of 9" or other female skin. Start using pick-up lines on them that you might use in the Star Trek universe. A few of our favorites: (1) "You wanna pretend to be my orion slave girl and stroke my tribble of love?" (2) "Why no, that's not a phasor phaser rifle in my pocket." And finally, (3) "How about we go someplace private and you can assimilate my alien probe?" Before long they'll either try to kill you exclusively, quit out of the game, or get turned on. Either way, it's mission accomplished.

When PC Gamer heard about our Mascot Showdown they feared for the safety of their precious monkey

PUBLISHER ···> SegaSoft	**DEVELOPER** ···> SegaSoft
REQUIRED ···> P200, 32MB RAM, 150MB hard drive, 4MB of video Memory, 28.8 modem	**IDEAL** ···> PII 400, 64MB RAM, ADSL or faster Internet connection

10-SIX

Everquest in space? Not really

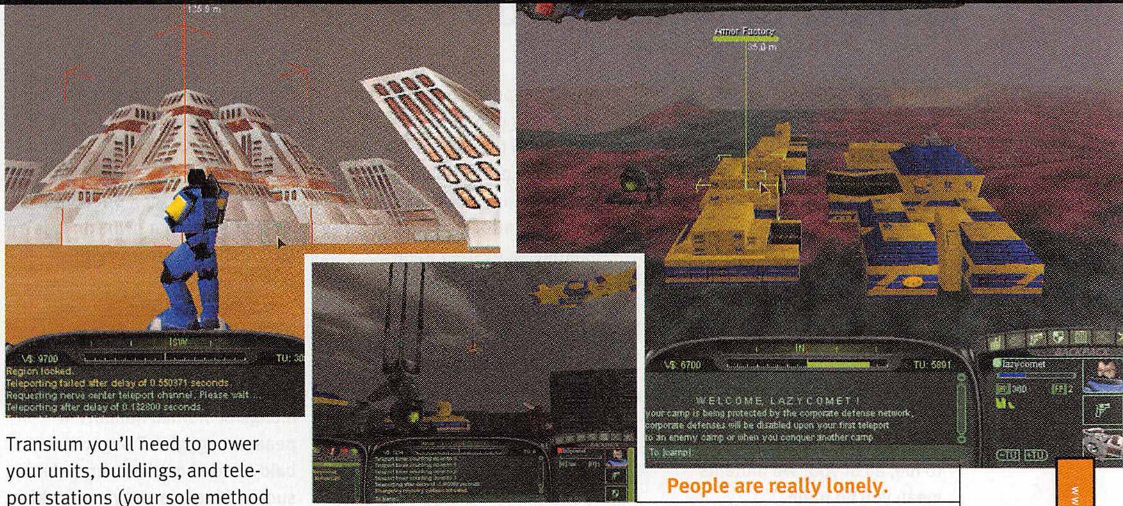
ACCELE-RATED

10-SIX won't win any awards for its graphic acceleration, and it looks as if it never intended to. Running fine on any accelerator card, *10-SIX*'s stereotypical effects look just a step or two above software quality.

With thousands of gamers giving their hard-earned cash to cyber-pimps like Origin, Microsoft, and Verant each month to play in their virtual sandboxes, massively multiplayer games are bigger than ever. SegaSoft now drops off *10-SIX*, a 3D realtime strategy with planetary exploration, at the online-only park to play with the other kids.

Set in the near-distant future, a planetoid, dubbed "Visitor," has entered our solar system. You'll join one of four mega-corporations (Extreme, Infrastruct, Brute Force, or ToyCo) with the intent of stripping Visitor of its most abundant mineral, Transium. Gameplay revolves around the alien Jitters. Found only on Visitor, these tiny silicon-based organisms can take the shape of buildings, weapons, and power-ups. After you use your initial Jitters, you'll have to acquire more. The twist — while not a very original one — is that Jitters have different rarities, and some of the better ones are almost impossible to acquire (think *Magic: The Gathering* with aliens).

You'll build your base out of your starting Jitters, then mine the Transium you'll need to power your units, buildings, and teleport stations (your sole method of travel). Sound simple? It should be. But *10-SIX* overcomplicates otherwise simple gameplay elements, like unit upgrades for example. Certain Jitters are incorporated to upgrade your units for various effects. However, applying them to your units is a painful process of moving the target unit to a specific building, turning the raw Jitter into a power-up, and then finally upgrading the damn unit — three tedious steps that could've been reduced to a simple one-click operation. Congratulations on making simple things difficult.



Region locked.
Teleporting failed after delay of 0.550371 seconds.
Requesting nerve center teleport channel. Please wait...
Teleporting after delay of 0.132800 seconds.

WELCOME, LAZYCOMET!
your camp is being protected by the corporate defense network.
corporate defenses will be disabled upon your first teleport
to an enemy camp or when you conquer another camp.
To [camp]:

People are really lonely.

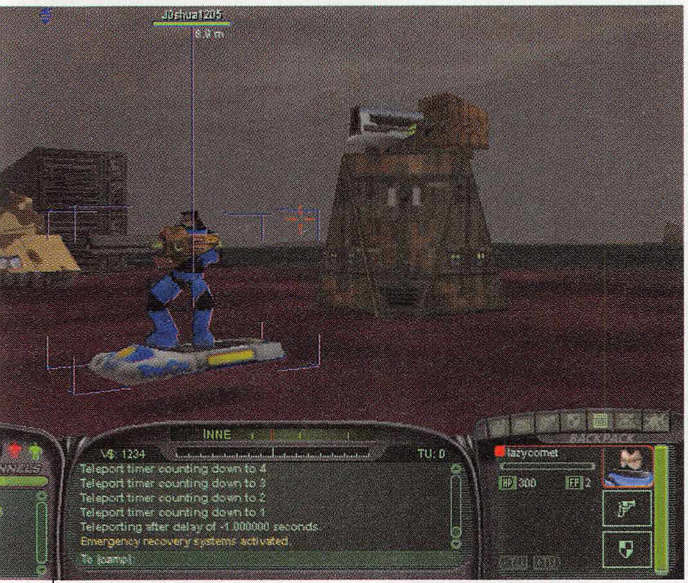
Combat is essential to survival, whether you're defending yourself or raiding some poor fool to get more Jitters. In most cases, you'll be initiating combat in a few days — after your defenses are in place. Luckily, newbies are protected from all attacks (their camp is locked by the powers that be). Once they enter an enemy camp for the first time, it's open season on their asses and their defenses had better be good.

Sadly, *10-SIX*'s combat is very awkward. I blame the incredibly dimwitted AI and the awful unit pathfinding (AKA rovers). They'll often get stuck on buildings, which is highly annoying during combat. Military units and structures range from land and air rovers, to defensive laser turrets and mobile artillery. And none are safe from the moronic AI.

Graphics and audio are both equally dull, and apparently streamlined for online play. Latency doesn't seem to be a problem when playing *10-SIX* on a broadband connection, however. But it did suffer from some lag on a 56.6k modem. And this game does crash a lot, no matter how fast the connection.

10-SIX lands somewhere between slightly addictive and dreadfully lame. Its shameful design decisions, game-crashing bugs, and crappy AI keep it from impressing anyone here at **PCXL**. Yet, there is a potentially rich environment which could be tapped into, should SegaSoft patch all the problems. Do not pay any money for this game until you've played through the free trial period and they've patched the hell out of it. Even then, be careful.

— **NASH WERNER'S** *10-SIX addiction wore off in a couple of weeks or so*



Teleport timer counting down to 4
Teleport timer counting down to 3
Teleport timer counting down to 2
Teleport timer counting down to 1
Teleporting after delay of -1.000000 seconds.
Emergency recovery systems activated.
To [camp]:

Take the name of the game and turn it into a mathematical equation: 10 - 6 = 4. This is still one too high, oh well.

GRAPHICS Seem intentionally dulled to help speed up online play. Don't expect anything flashy.

SOUND Pretty dull. Weapon effects, explosions, and interface chirping all sound uninspired.

DEPTH A huge planet where you can buy, sell, or steal new equipment. There is some depth to the game.

DESIGN The interface is difficult, and it's riddled with game-crashing bugs. *10-SIX* needs lots of work.

PLUSES

+ Huge world to explore
+ Rare, uncommon, and common weapons
+ User-driven economy

MINUSES

- Combat is sloppy
- Awful AI and pathfinding
- Frustrating learning-curve
- Doesn't feature crippled midgets

RATING 3

www.pcxl.com

The New York City Police code 10-6 means "Stand By." 10-69 means hang on for a minute

X-Box Announced

MUTANT COMMUNITY OUTRAGED

Bill Gates' recent announcement of Microsoft's new X-Box game console was abruptly interrupted by a furious gang of super-powered genetic mishaps led by mutant sympathizer Professor X.

"Do you not see?" implored the frantic scientist, rumored to be afflicted by powerful brain mutations, to the stunned crowd. "This device ... it will only serve to hurt ... *my people*! Please, please listen to me, all of you. We mutants mean you no harm."

A swift response from Microsoft sent an army of robotic mutant-hunters onto the convention floor to heroically protect Mr. Gates and a panicked audience from the unprovoked attack.

"Sentinels, destroy them ... ALL!" commanded Gates from behind a force-field quickly generated by the X-Box prototype. "I would also like to mention to the crowd that protection from mutants is only one of the many features of the X-Box, set to be released in September 2001 at a very competitive price point. Will the Playstation 2 protect you from evil, hideous mutants? I don't think so."

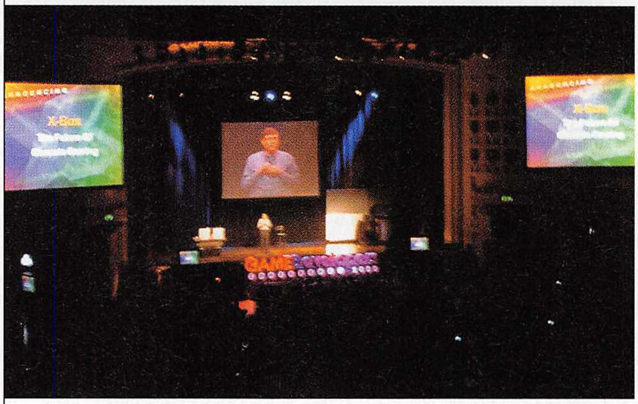
"Gates! Do not ... do ... *this!*" pleaded Professor X but added "Is it because ... your own son ... is a MUTANT?!" A disturbing hush fell over the crowd.

"NOOO! You lie, monstrous freak! *YOU LIE!!!*" replied Gates.

"All of you, please, hear my words. Mutants only want to live alongside normal humans in peaaaarrrrgggh ..." began the bald-headed mutie-lover, before succumbing to a stray energy blast from a nearby Sentinel and falling to the ground.

The mutant band, reportedly known as the "X-Men," was quickly dispatched by the Sentinels and transported to Microsoft containment facilities for "further testing." The reason for their attack was unclear, though Gates asserts that paranoia over new technologies may be to blame.

Gates then concluded with a smirk, "I guess you can't hold a party without expecting a few crashers. Now, let's get back to discussing how my beloved X-Box will take over the world ... metaphorically, of course."



This was the scene immediately before an attack by international terrorists, the X-Men. They're hiding behind the curtain. Really.

THE POWER METER

Only industry geeks read this, so if you're not one of them, move along. Microsoft has had the number one spot for a few months, but Activision is finally releasing games now (not like we'll be around to review 'em).

THIS MONTH	LAST MONTH	
1	2	**ACTIVISION** ···> *Soldier of Fortune* and *Star Trek Armada* are out, and *Elite Force* is coming. Looks like a solid Q2.
2	1	**MICROSOFT** ···> *Allegiance* and *Starlancer* are all well and good, but the real power for Microsoft is the future.
3	6	**BLIZZARD** ···> The *Diablo II* beta is underway. Expect the final in late June or July. Yeah!
4	5	**EIDOS** ···> *Daikatana*'s out (maybe), *Deus Ex* is soon-ish, plus *Project I.G.I.* and *Hitman*. Finally, we can look forward to more than Lara's ta-tas.
5	3	**HASBRO** ···> *X-Com Alliance* is intriguing, but no *Rollercoaster Tycoon 2* and a weak 2000 line-up is concerning.
6	4	**MAXIS** ···> *The Sims* still rolls on, but eventually we'll have to return to our real lives, so it won't last forever.
7	7	**SIERRA** ···> Until *Tribes 2* marches out this summer, we've only got the *Homeworld* add-on for comfort.
8	-	**INTERPLAY** ···> *Messiah* is finally out. Now if they can only fire the guys over at Planet Moon or get them to release *Giants*.
9	-	**ELECTRONIC ARTS** ···> A slew of underwhelming titles seems like a rocky start, but the annual parade of year-end sports updates should make their holidays happy.
10	9	**RED STORM** ···> *USS Vangard* and that encyclopedia game thingie for *Rainbow Six* doesn't ensure the brightest of futures for Red Storm.

FRENCH DEVELOPERS WE COULD LIVE WITHOUT	**TITUS** ···> The I-Magic of France owns Interplay but has released only one craptacular N64 game. This is how socialism fails — government-sponsored games that suck.
	UBISOFT ···> Unlike Titus they've got more than one "hit" on their hands, like *Rayman* (the guy with no arms or legs), or *Hype* (*Zelda* rip-off). We can barely hold back our French-tastic urgings.

FANTASY FRAG

DR. LAURA SCHLESSINGER

WHY SHE SHOULD BE FRAGGED ···> (1) Nude pictures of her on the Internet induce hysterical blindness. (2) Her books are all about 10 reasons she's better than you. (3) She's against sex, alcohol, lesbians, and gays (but mainly lesbians). (4) Loves to insult people, but starts blubbering and whining when she gets ripped. (5) Has her own line of tea party sets. Even Martha Stewart isn't that bad! (6) Like an anorexic, female Rush Limbaugh, and not as good looking. (7) Screams at and insults her callers (that's our job!). (8) She's getting her own T.V. show. (9) Did we mention she's against lesbians? (10) Actually said she wants to offer up a 14-year-old girl for human sacrifice (see newsweek.com). This woman is clearly evil personified.

HOW SHE SHOULD BE FRAGGED ···> She should be forced to read the book *Ten Explosive Objects You Should Never Shove Up Your Ass*, then be subjected to all 10 anal horrors in front of a live audience of people she has insulted (i.e., the whole frickin' world). If she survives (and we're guessing the bitch is as tough as a cockroach, and just might), then we'll unleash the masses on what remains of her old, wrinkly body.

Before our asses got shut down, we used to frag whatever the heck made us angry or just plain needed fragging. That was then and this is now. While www.pcxl.com is no more, check out all the online craziness happening at our new digs at **www.dailyradar.com.**

Celebrity Deathmatch we'd like to see ···> Dr. Laura vs Judge Judy, fatally nagging each other

PC Accelerator Special Report

GRANDMA: STILL DOESN'T UNDERSTAND COMPUTERS

The findings are clear. By a margin of 4-to-1, grandmas simply don't "get" computers. Confirming our research, Grandma says, "Oh, I don't know anything about that stuff." Here are the results of an average experiment:

"Here, just use the mouse and click on that icon ..."

"Eh, what did you say, dear?"

"I said, USE THE MOUSE AND CLICK ON THAT ICON ..."

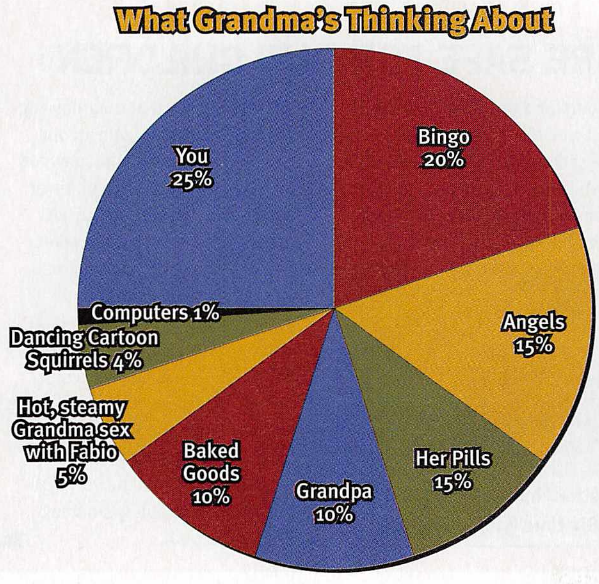
"Oh, I'm too old to learn about compooters."

"No, you're not. And it's comp-YEW-ters. Say it with me – comp-YEW-terr, lady ..."

"Listen, Deary, we had compooters when I was your age. Not little ones like these, but giant ones that filled up whole rooms. Oh, but these new ones are just amazing, aren't they? And people can talk to each other with that big Innerweb thing. Back in my day, we didn't have anything like that. Goodness, I remember ... (fades off into unintelligible Grandma-speak, eventually leading to her offering cookies from her seemingly bottomless jar of fresh, gooey cookies.)"

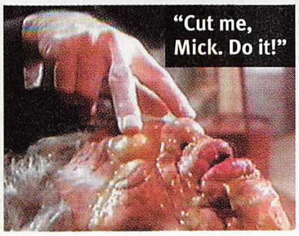
Grandma is also not very clear on the concept of fashion.

Studies also show that Grandma isn't quite sure what a video game is, believed that Y2K would destroy the world as we know it, and thinks "Touched By An Angel" is a documentary.



NEWS BRIEFS

Ginger ale will get that stain right out.



"Cut me, Mick. Do it!"

Eidos adds Guts to Guts

Eidos has announced that they are bringing the game *Sword of the Berserk: Guts' Rage* to the American market. In addition, they have decided to increase the level of blood and gore in the game by a full 30 percent over the Japanese version. The breakdown of the increase is as follows: 5% more blood geysers, 7% more decapitations, 4% more eye gougings, 3% more impalings, 6% more eviscerations, and 5% more images of Tonya Harding breaking kneecaps. The increases came after extensive research indicated that it would be "way cool."

Sega Ate My Balls

Sega of Japan has announced plans to release a new game for the Dreamcast called *Get!! Colonies*. The game is puzzle-based and targets a new audience previously unexplored by Sega. Each player starts with two balls. The object is to try and touch the balls of the other players, at which point their balls are yours. It is also possible to expand your balls by using them in an unoccupied area. Whether you are supposed to win by having more balls then your opponents or surrounding their balls with yours is still unclear. However, due to the number or pre-orders for this game, Sega has already started work on a sequel with force feedback support tentatively titled *Get Your Dirty, Filthy Hands Off My Anus!*

Cyberathlete Suit Settled

Electronic Arts and NewWorld.com have reached an agreement that settled a lawsuit between the two companies. The suit, which was filed by NewWorld, was based on the usage of the term "Cyberathlete." The dispute arose from the definition used by each company. EA described cyberathletes as "lard-asses," "pathetic geeks with no real lives," and "losers that haven't had a date in over eight months." However, NewWorld believed that a cyberathlete must be "incapable of getting a real job," have "lots of cooties," as well as being "a real pervert that surfs for porn every chance they get." The dispute was ended when the companies realized that both definitions were correct.

Related?

Yet again, we've looked through the news headlines, and noticed the many similarities between what's going on with the world and our coworkers here at **PCXL**.

British cabbies' brains grow with use
— Eric Smith's ass grows with dis-use

Scientists successfully clone five pigs
— Mike Salmon says he's discovered a way to reduce the staff budget

Kenyan women demand sex from cops
— The **PCXL** staff members contemplate careers in law enforcement

Six-year-old Cuban boy gains national media attention
— Matt Holmes finds reason to get over crush on 'N Sync

The startling absence of Babe-O-Rama on the **PCXL** website can be blamed on Elian Gonzalez

GameScan

GAMING'S URBAN LEGENDS

Silly, unsubstantiated rumors have plagued the game industry for years. We vowed that when we had the power, we'd do something. And we are — we made our own! Here are 12 upcoming games and 12 tall tales for each.

MARTIAN GOTHIC

Developer ···➝ Creative Reality

Publisher ···➝ Talonsoft

Release Date ···➝ May

Game Info ···➝ Imagine *Resident Evil* in space with three characters, and you'd have a good idea of what *Martian Gothic* is all about. The game has fighting, puzzle-solving, and zombie-killing tossed in to satisfy your need to blow shit up.

The Rumor ···➝ Capcom was originally going to publish *MG* using the *Mission To Mars* license, but decided at the last minute that the movie would bomb.

VIP

Developer ···➝ Kalisto

Publisher ···➝ Ubi Soft

Release Date ···➝ Oct. 2000

Game Info ···➝ Someone got the idea that Pamela Anderson Lee's obvious assets would help make a good game. As a result, there will soon be a mission-based game featuring Pam in her role of Vallery Irons bodyguarding the stars. You'll have access to a variety of weapons in what is being billed as a tongue-in-cheek (they didn't say whose tongue and which cheeks) action/adventure, but judging from the show, we bet most missions will involve getting Pam wet and playing volleyball.

The Rumor ···➝ Pamela Anderson Lee employs "stunt breasts" during her close-ups. A special in-game code will let you see 'em.

The Heat-O-Meter

THE FAT LADY SINGS EDITION

WHAT'S HOT

WAMPA RAT HUNTER 3D ···➝ Verant and Lucas Arts have officially announced their massively multiplayer persistant world RPG set in the Star Wars universe. A financial coup for George Lucas, each player in the game will have an action figure on sale at Toys R Us within three months of release.

THQ DOWN UNDER ···➝ THQ has expanded its international operations to Australia, citing its need to serve the country's gaming market. In response to the news, he said he was very grateful.

IT'S ABOUT TIME ···➝ Excruciatingly long-awaited games *Messiah* and *Daikatana* have been released, delighting fans everywhere. Conversely, fan site webmasters accustomed to a steady diet of new screenshots have lost the will to live.

BETAMANIA ···➝ The *Diablo II* beta test is underway, causing worldwide hysteria. Some are overjoyed that they'll soon get to play the game, but the vast majority dread hearing "I sense a soul in search of answers" for the millionth time.

WHAT'S COLD

X-BUDS ···➝ It looks like Microsoft didn't tell Gigabyte and AMD, two of their original technology partners on the X-Box, that they were replaced until shortly before the console's official announcement. If that's how they treat their friends, what do you think they'll do to Sony, Sega, and Nintendo?

THE NOT-SO-GREAT PUMPKIN ···➝ UK-based developer Pumpkin Studios (of *Warzone 2100* infamy) closed down following Eidos' cancellation of their latest project, *Saboteur* for the Playstation. After blowing out the light, Eidos reportedly carried the used and rumpled developer out to the trash heap before accidentally dropping it, making a loud, squishy orange splat.

DUTCH TREACLE ···➝ European developers are dropping like flies these days. Dutch-based Project 2 Interactive is shutting its doors after declaring bankruptcy with an estimated debt of $5.5 million dollars. Famous for making adventure games like *Reah* and *Ark of Time*, the reported cause of Project 2's bankruptcy is that they made adventure games like *Reah* and *Ark of Time*.

CODEMASTERS TAKES A DUMP ···➝ The company has cancelled development on all U.S.-based non-multiplayer games, including *Navy SEALS*, to focus on the online community. In response, the online community was heard to comment that they'd rather just be left alone with their kiddie porn.

GAME KILLER

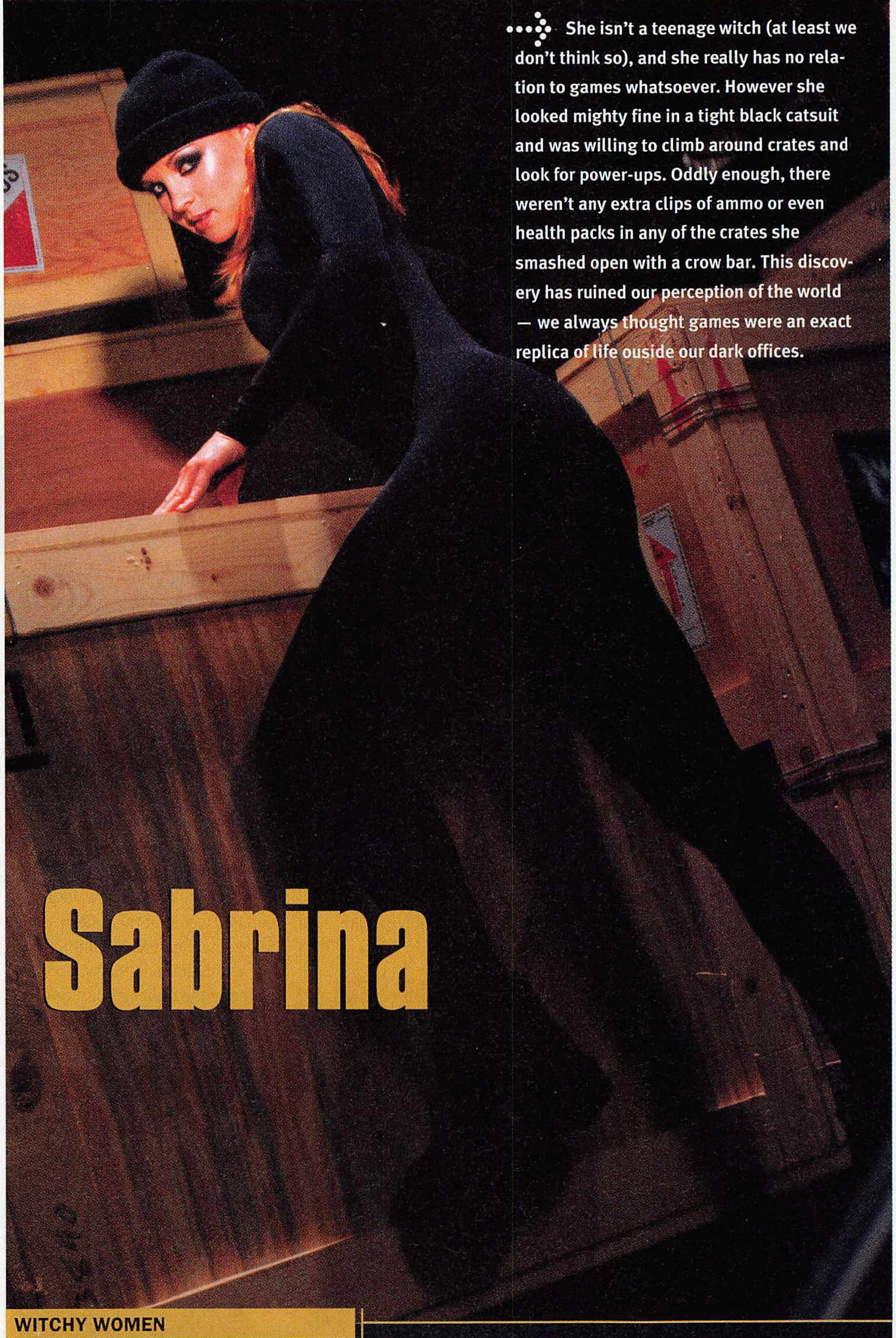
Killing Matt's Game

MAKING THE FUTURE SAFE FOR OUR CHILDREN

It's safe to say that there is nothing more vile or despicable than the sight of Matt "the unemployed new guy" Holmes' attempts to score with chicks. How his pick-up lines — including such gems as, "Nice tits, can I grab 'em?" and "If I told you you had a hot body, would you hold my love-meat?" — could ever work defies all laws of nature. Matt's a moron, a geek who can barely pick his ass up out of bed, much less go out and pick up someone else's ass and bed it. But call Ripley's, because every so often he actually succeeds in his pathetic efforts. In order to better understand this bizarre ritual, we followed him in an effort to learn the secrets of "Pickupchix-Fu." For a while we were astounded by women's remarkable ability to completely ignore Matt's ugly puss, lame jokes, and Barney Fife-ish physique — but still go out with him anyway. It soon dawned on us that his evil reign of terror had to end. So we secretly let these poor unsuspecting ladies know the truth behind the freak, tailing him to every bar, and talking trash behind his back — upping said chicks' resistance to the Holmes disease. The result? Lots of laughs, as his normal game was thwarted and the world once again came back into balance, with Matt firmly on the very bottom of the (extremely shallow) **PCXL** gene pool.

Matt + Fine Girl + Moving Lips = Big time lying going on.

WOMEN WE LOVE TO PLAY



⇢ She isn't a teenage witch (at least we don't think so), and she really has no relation to games whatsoever. However she looked mighty fine in a tight black catsuit and was willing to climb around crates and look for power-ups. Oddly enough, there weren't any extra clips of ammo or even health packs in any of the crates she smashed open with a crow bar. This discovery has ruined our perception of the world — we always thought games were an exact replica of life ouside our dark offices.

Sabrina

Just like in most third-person action/adventures, Sabrina felt an urge to push crates around

WITCHY WOMEN

TEENAGE WITCH

WITCH CREDENTIALS ⇢ She's a teenage witch on TV, and friends with Britney Spears off-screen – debatable which one makes her more witchy

ALYSSA MILANO

WITCH CREDENTIALS ⇢ She plays a witch on "Charmed" opposite real-life witch Shannon Doherty. And there is no doubt that her mother is an evil witch from hell

SAMANTHA

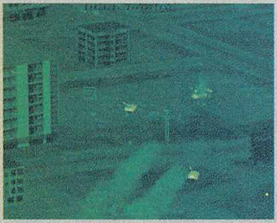
WITCH CREDENTIALS ⇢ The original TV witch twitched her nose and made life easy for her relucatant mortal husband Darrin. Also played evil (sexy) sister Sabrina

NEVE CAMPBELL

WITCH CREDENTIALS ⇢ Played hideously scarred teenager turned no longer scarred teenage witch in the abysmal movie, *The Craft* – didn't get naked

GameScan

GAMING'S URBAN LEGENDS



GUNSHIP

Developer ⇢ MicroProse

Publisher ⇢ Hasbro

Release Date ⇢ March/April 2000

Game Info ⇢ Russians have decided to open an industrial size can of whup-ass in Europe. Flying in one of four assault helicopters, you can help them invade or help stomp on 'em. It's got impressive 3D graphics, multiplayer support, and will supposedly be able to combine with *Tank Platoon!* when it's released. Not bad if you like flight sims and accidentally found yourself owning a copy of *Tank Platoon!*

The Rumor ⇢ Gunship is based on stolen schematics of a real Russian assault helicopter prototype.

ART OF MAGIC

Developer ⇢ Mythos

Publisher ⇢ Bethesda

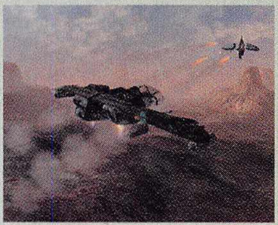
Release Date ⇢ Q1 2001

Game Info ⇢ Another upcoming title from the *X-COM* people, *Art of Magic* drops you right into the middle of a war between the forces of law and chaos. Fortunately you don't go in defenseless. Your character has the ability to use and control magic, and the more you use these abilities, the more easily you can control them. Unfortunately the war is only the tip of the iceberg, because the universe itself might be destroyed, and that could really ruin your day.

The Rumor ⇢ The development team is programming and designing *Art of Magic* while stoned on mushrooms.

GameScan

GAMING'S URBAN LEGENDS



ECHELON

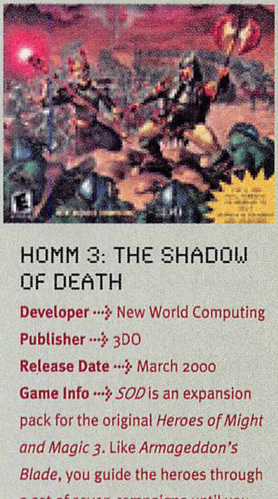
Developer ···› Madia

Publisher ···› Bethesda

Release Date ···› August 2000

Game Info ···› A futuristic flight sim, *Echelon* puts you in the pilot seat of any one of a dozen aircraft. It features mission-based campaigns where your actions influence the difficulty of oncoming battles, as well as your duties, aircraft models, and mission types. The graphics look pretty good, and it comes with both co-op and deathmatch multiplayer options galore.

The Rumor ···› While being shown a demo of the game on a campaign stop, Senator John McCain began having violent wartime flashbacks.



HOMM 3: THE SHADOW OF DEATH

Developer ···› New World Computing

Publisher ···› 3DO

Release Date ···› March 2000

Game Info ···› *SOD* is an expansion pack for the original *Heroes of Might and Magic 3*. Like *Armageddon's Blade*, you guide the heroes through a set of seven campaigns until you win. There are some new structures, single-player maps, and a new class of artifacts, but it's not all that different from the first one. If you like the rest of the series, it should be enough to keep you interested until the inevitable (and incredibly long-named) *Heroes of Might and Magic 4* takes its place.

The Rumor ···› Eerily, three New World designers died during the making of *HOMM3*. Coincidence?

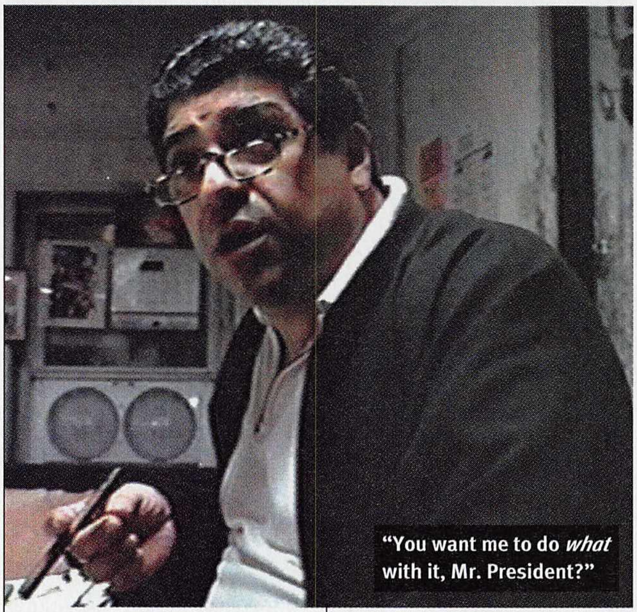
www.DailyRadar.com

Join our "Bring Back Pussy" drive by writing HBO and demanding more Pussy

A MOMENT WITH GIA DECARLO

How to Handle Pussy

PUSSIES AREN'T MADE FOR WHACKING



"You want me to do *what* with it, Mr. President?"

For my last column, I'm taking a break from the problems of hair-palmed geeks and talk about one of my personal obsessions, "The Sopranos." In particular, I'd like to give some special advice to Tony Soprano about how he could've handled the late, great flipped goodfellow, "Big Pussy" Bompensiero. If Tony had only invested some tender loving care, he could've manipulated the wayward Puss to his advantage. And if a gal like me doesn't have an insider's perspective on Pussy, who does?

Get Pussy On Your Side

Pussy is your friend, and you shouldn't be afraid of Pussy no matter how big and scary Pussy may seem. The key to getting Pussy on your side is learning how to handle the soft underbelly. Behind Pussy's tough exterior (or what I like to call his "hood"), lies an extremely sensitive area that, if handled correctly will bring Pussy to your side forever. Pussy is complicated, and each person will have a different experience with Pussy. However I've found that with some basic Pussy-handling skills, anyone can do it. At first I'd suggest gently kissing up to Pussy. At first Pussy may not be receptive, but by continuously working on his soft underbelly in a circular motion (or even up and down — never, ever side to side), eventually Pussy will succumb to the stimulation and leave those other fatties behind.

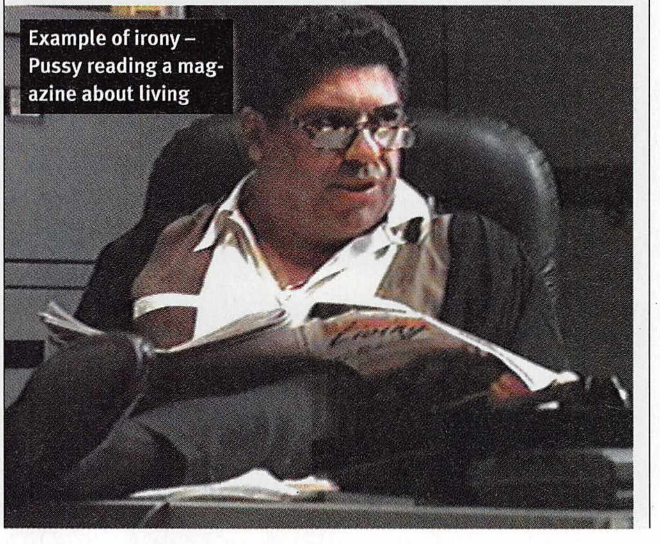
Make Pussy Your Bitch

Now that you've got Pussy back on your side, it's time to put Puss in his place. By simultaneously handling his soft underbelly, and probing into his darker wants and desires in a rhythmic manner, Pussy will pretty much do anything you want. Just try to control yourself or he might get emotional and you'll end up with a sloppy Pussy ... and nobody wants that. At this point you should use your relationship with Pussy to move in on other members, but try not to distance yourself too much — Pussy is high maintenance and needs lots of attention.

Meow!

A Final Word About Pussy

It's obviously too late for you to get inside Pussy, but if you'd taken the time to work Pussy, then Pussy might've been more than just a friend — Pussy could've been your eternal slave and no longer have strayed from your gang. As it is, Pussy's now very deep and wet ... at the bottom of the ocean. I personally think you were a little hard on Pussy. I hope you made the right choice, Tony. If he were my Pussy, I would've given him another chance.



Example of irony – Pussy reading a magazine about living

CHACHI OF THE MONTH

Our Chachi Is ...

THIS MONTH'S WINNER: SCOTT BAIO

Ever since **PCXL** launched nearly two years ago, our sad competition has been stealing from us each and every month. Well, in a last-ditch effort to save our jobs, we're stealing one of theirs. Another so-called gaming mag has a section where they give an award to the best bribe offered by gaming PR companies. We wanted to copy this directly, but since we don't take pay-offs from game companies (and wouldn't want to publicize it if we did) and since we can't spell yiddish words to save our asses, we decided to create Chachi Of The Month.

THIS MONTH ···> Chachi
WHY HE WINS ···> There has really never been a better Chachi (or any other Chachi for that matter) than Scott Baio. He was cool, dreamy (or so Gia tells us), and he nailed Joanie. And remember the "Happy Days" spinoff, "Joanie Loves Chachi"? Notice how it's not called "Chachi Loves Joanie"? He put his woman in her place. Chachi, we forgive you for "Blansky's Beauties," "Charles In Charge," and for TV movies with Willie Aames. You are the man!
NEXT MONTH ···> Can there possibly be a better Chachi? Find out!

"Have you seen my career?"

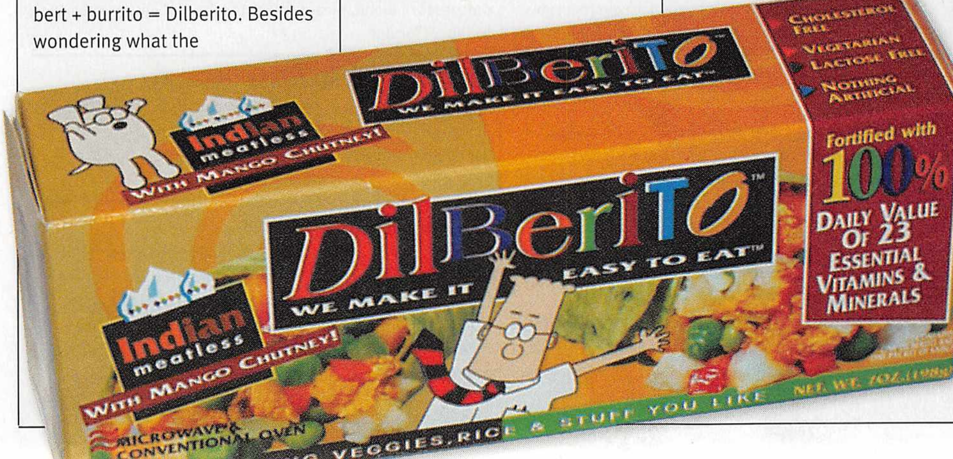
WHAT THE HELL?

The Dilberito

YUMMY TREATS FOR BRAINY GEEKS

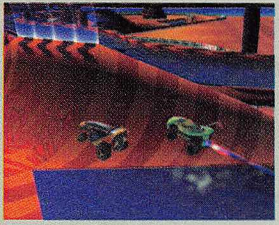
No, the spellcheckers weren't licking toads (again) — it really is a Dilberito. Y'see, it's from Scott Adams, the guy whose "Dilbert" cartoon let us in on well-kept secrets like "work sucks" and "bosses are stupid" (with the exception of our own Mike Salmon, that is ... his hair is pointy on purpose). Seems Adams went on a marketing bender into your grocer's freezer with his own line of "healthy" burritos. Get it? Dilbert + burrito = Dilberito. Besides wondering what the hell Dilbert is doing pimping Mexican foodstuffs (hey, is that a Ratbert tail?), we wondered how we could get in on the action. "Pizza Accelerator" gaming snacks? Gia DeCarmel Flan? Babe-O-Lada's?

Our team of get-rich-quick schemers are working on it even as you read this, but to satisfy our own curiosity, we tried a meatless Indian Dilberito with mango chutney (included). Hot, tangy, and filling, the Dilberito's slogan is "yummy tasting veggies, rice, and stuff you like." For snack food bottom feeders like us, "stuff you like" doesn't include veggies, but we've gave it a shot anyway. Believe it or not, it was actually damn good for health food. One thing bothered us — if it's a veggie snack, then why is there a picture of Dogbert on the box? Not to get all Soylent Green about it, but do you think? Naah ...



GameScan

GAMING'S URBAN LEGENDS



STUNT GP

Developer ···> Team 17
Publisher ···> Infogrames
Release Date ···> Fall 2000
Game Info ···> An RC stunt racing game by the same people who made the *Worms* series. The object is simple: Win races while performing stunts to gain bonuses, which can be used to upgrade your car. It has 24 tracks and 16 customizable cars from which to choose, multiplayer support, and over seven modes of single-player gameplay to ensure at least some replayability.
The Rumor ···> If you perform all the stunts in the third race, a Worm will show up, say "Take that!" and lob a grenade at your car.

JAMES BOND: THE WORLD IS NOT ENOUGH

Developer ···> Twine
Publisher ···> EA
Release Date ···> TBA
Game Info ···> Making use of the *Quake 3* engine, this game incarnation of James Bond will undoubtedly be the best looking and fastest moving so far. You either sneak around missions or kill everything in sight (usually both), supplied with Q's usual assortment of gadgets. With multiplayer support the game has guaranteed replay value, and Bond fans will appreciate clips taken directly from the movie.
The Rumor ···> Desmond Llewelyn, who played Q in the Bond series, died in an automobile accident while driving home after recording voiceovers for this game.

In the works? "The Dilberator" — office satire and pleasing sexual device in one vibrating package

GameScan

GAMING'S URBAN LEGENDS

RUNE

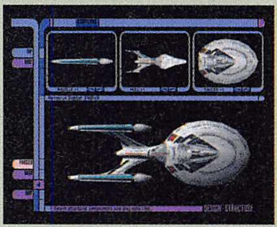
Developer ···➝ Human Head Studios

Publisher ···➝ Gathering Of Developers (or GOD)

Release Date ···➝ Summer 2000

Game Info ···➝ "Decapitation, dismemberment, and death" sums up this new third-person action game from Human Head studios. Using a modified version of the *Unreal* engine, you're a young Viking warrior who runs around killing stuff with sharp objects. And since you can chop off someone's limb and beat 'em to death with it, you never have to worry about being unarmed.

The Rumor ···➝ A real human head is on display in Human Head Studios conference room, and is the inspiration for their name.



STAR TREK STARSHIP CREATOR: WARP 2

Developer ···➝ IMERGY

Publisher ···➝ Simon & Schuster Interactive

Release Date ···➝ Q2 / Q3 2000

Game Info ···➝ The sequel to *Starship Creator Deluxe*, this game allows you to design your own Star Trek vessels and send them on missions. It comes with its own mission editor to let you do what you want with your vessels after you design them. Once *Star Trek: Dominion Wars* is released, players will also be able to transfer their own vessels into it from *Warp 2*. This is truly a Trekkers-only game, however.

The Rumor ···➝ A proposed deal for William Shatner to promote *Warp 2* fell through when it was disclosed that he is now fatter than Scotty and Uhura combined

This just in ···➝ Eric decided to work on the "disfigured freak" thing by getting arm-length tattoos

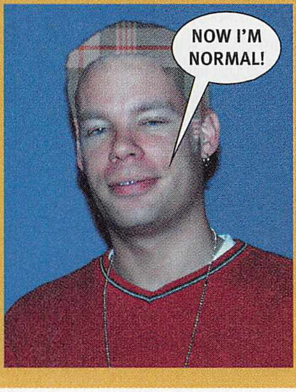
... AND GOOD RIDDANCE

Hair Today, Gone Tomorrow

ART DIRECTORS COME AND GO ... BUT MOSTLY GO

A man of few words and many hair colors, Kyle LeBoeuf has been with **PCXL** since the very beginning. First serving as our underappreciated Assistant Art Director and then ascending the ranks (well, err, rank) to the top spot of art director in a bloody coup. (It looked bloody, but in hindsight we realize it was just Kyle's legendary "red" phase.)

Not content to rest on his laurels, Kyle grew bored with the current limits of multi-hued follicle technology. In an incredibly dangerous and undeniably silly experiment, the full color spectrum was photon-blasted onto his scalp. Unfortunately, tragedy struck when the procedure went horribly awry, producing the world's first plaid-haired man. (Phyllis Diller achieved the same back in 1977 for the women.)



Now a disfigured freak, Kyle has been banished to the Imagine IT department, leaving behind the fast-paced world of graphic design. Replacing him, we're happy to announce that Ass Art Director (that's *ass*, not assistant) Eric Smith has graciously agreed to take on Kyle's title, his much nicer Mac, his spacious, comfy desk, and ... oh, what's that? The mag got canned? Hey, Kyle, is there any more room in IT?

Classifieds

JOBS THE GAMES INDUSTRY JUST MIGHT BE ADVERTISING

Master Candidate Gold Disc Maker Needed!

Last employee died from exhaustion. Must have thick hyde and be able to handle repeated rejection. Proficiency in kissing rock star-figurehead ass very helpful. No experience required. Contact Ion Storm today!

Now Hiring Executives

Are you a CEO? Ever want to be? Well, now's your chance! Plenty of positions open at Aureal, including President, General Counsel, CEO, CFO, CTO, COO, and many more acronyms to choose from. The only catch is that you'll have to work for free for about six months or so, until company reorganizes. Please do not call or visit the Aureal office — nobody is there.

Wanted: New Agent

Recent Oscar winner and part-time Goth chick seeking new representation. Currently contracted to star in video game movie, which as we all know is the kiss of death to any serious acting career. Please have experience in breaking contracts – break mine and you're hired! If you're half as good as you think you are, you'll know who I am and are already speed-dialing me or my obviously gay brother as you read this.

Please Help!

I've lost my way. Can you help me? Owner of multimedia giant in the world of film and games has lost his vision and desperately wants to regain it. Once produced fantastic games based on own license, but now more concerned with action figures and CGI characters than quality. If you can help, or just want to talk, please write. I'm lonely ... so very lonely. George L.

Seeking George L.

George, I sense a kindred spirit. I know what it's like to feel that the whole world is against you. Oh, and to intimidate everyone I meet because I've got more money than God. Let's get together and laugh at the little people. Bill G.

Who Wants To Be Regis?

Has anybody ever told you that you sound just like TV star Regis Philbin? If so, Disney Interactive has an exciting new opportunity for YOU. *Who Wants To Be A Millionaire 2-6* are currently in development, but the real Regis wants too much money. Won't you be our Regis? Send resume and audio tape to "I'm A Lot Cheaper Than Regis" c/o Disney.

Job Wanted

Royal game designer has abdicated his throne and seeks new subjects. Enjoys dressing up in capes and referring to himself as Lord. Fed up with "the man." **Likes:** RPGs, massively multiplayer environments. **Dislikes:** EA, fatties. If interested, send virtuous avatar with scroll detailing compensation. Lord British.

Lost: Head

Last seen in hallway of Raven offices. One second I had it, the next it was missing. Little value except sentimental, but attached to it since it controls all my motor skills and thought processes. If found, please return to John Mullens, professional soldier of fortune.

Graphic Art Job Available

PCXL is looking for a new Ass Art Director. Well, WAS looking for a ... well, never mind. Nipple wrangling and severe sleep deprivation required. Don't call us, we'll call you. Do not contact office —nobody is there ... really.

Victoria Got A Real Secret?

Hot 'n Chunky Boutique caters to the plus-sized gal pretending to not look like a suckling pig. Offers full selection of ripple-hiding girdles and fat-packing bras as well as black latex pants GUARANTEED not to split in the middle when your hulking frame attempts to squeeze into them. While shopping, enjoy our complimentary Snapple (wink, wink) and Celery (nudge, nudge) to keep up appearances.

DEVELOPER SPOTLIGHT

Over the Rainbow

(STUDIOS, THAT IS)

Rumor has is that there's a swimming pool and polo court up on the roof. They wouldn't let us up there to check it out, though.

Nothing gets you higher on a developer than going to their offices and seeing a game so cool that by the time you leave, you just *know* it's going to impact the gaming community like the fist of God. After hitting Rainbow Studios to check out *Motocross Madness 2*, they immediately went to the top of the "cool-ass mofos" list without even having to provide free crack!

Snuggled into some rather decayed urban surroundings in Phoenix, Arizona, is a two-story, windowless cube that houses a whole lotta talent. Things brighten up considerably once you walk through the office doors, however, and that has a lot to do with the enormous motion-capture stage that takes up the entire center of the building. Cruise to the left and you'll see the sound room and separate recording studio. Try not to drool on the 30-foot-long room filled with hard drives. The building was once a recording studio and soundstage, but now it's a big square container of whoop-ass.

Rainbow's 14-year history spans several elements of the digital entertainment industry. Having wet their feet with multimedia training programs and television commercials, Rainbow has gradually transitioned to game development and making a full-length 100% CGI movie that is very hush-hush. Alien ships and exploding planets, anyone?

The huge success of the original *Motocross Madness* follows a good-sized stable of older games. Rainbow Studios' past holds everything from an air-traffic control game (*Air Havoc Controller*) to *Deadly Tide*, *Ravage D.C.X.*, and even the recently released *Tiger Woods 2000*. (No word on whether Tiger had any problems having mo-cap electrodes pasted all over his body, but it's still a pretty hefty endorsement, don't you think?)

The current blockbuster is *Motocross Madness 2*, with its immensely realistic outdoor areas and white-knuckling action. This title shows that they have the ability to pack a new set of killer features into a game without changing what made it fun in the first place. After *MCM2*, though, they are branching away from the PC roots with their next two titles. At this year's E3 expo, Rainbow will announce two games already in development for the Playstation 2. With its processing power and ease in development (due to a standard hardware set-up), the PS2 is an attractive platform for a developer just coming out of a grueling crunch period.

Gamers are in good shape. Rainbow Studios is hitting its stride with more and more successful games, and the future looks bright for those of us that like to be entertained by the best art, technology, and design. Additionally, their powerhouse CGI team will also continue to crank out cinematic art and even full-length movies. ◗

This is their combo motion-capture stage and squaredancing arena.

HMMM...

RAINBOW STUDIO'S OFFICE HAS NO WINDOWS. WHAT'S UP WITH THAT?

The dev team is comprised exclusively of supermodels

The last thing you want is holes in your building when it's 120 degrees outside

Much like vampires, developers are fatally allergic to sunlight

People work best when not reminded of the outside world they once inhabited

Bums peering through windows can adversely affect morale and efficiency

Fresh air is for wimps

Company dress code: Total nudity!

GameScan

GAMING'S URBAN LEGENDS

HOMEWORLD: CATACLYSM

Developer ···› Barking Dog Studios

Publisher ···› Sierra

Release Date ···› Q2 2000

Game Info ···› *Cataclysm* takes place 15 years after *Homeworld*. This add-on pits your mining vessel against a previously unknown enemy that seeks to destroy all life. You get new ships, technology, and weaponry to help kick some serious alien ass, plus new features like waypoints and 17 new missions.

The Rumor ···› Jane Jensen (*Gabriel Knight* series writer) wrote an early treatment of *Cataclysm*'s story, but it was so complex that testers fell asleep at their computers.

TROPICO

Developer ···› PopTop

Publisher ···› Gathering Of Developers (or GOD)

Release Date ···› Q4 2000

Game Info ···› *Tropico* is a lot like *Sim City*, but with one significant difference: This building game takes place in a Caribbean island nation ruled by a dictator (that would be you). In addition to taking care of your citizens, you must also plan for the possibility of revolutions and political dissent. If the people don't like what you do, they'll let you know by storming the palace, but that's what your army (and martial law) are for.

The Rumor ···› Fidel Castro is a huge sim fan and actually called GOD personally to make sure *Tropico* gets released in Cuba.

We're really sick of Fidel Castro. Shouldn't he be dead by now?

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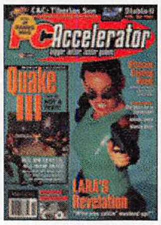
The insider's look into the Dreamcast phenomenon with a special exclusive GD-ROM! The only place to get exclusive Dreamcast game demo previews! 250,000 readers after just 5 issues!

4 MILLION

FROM THE CORE GAMER TO THE

IMAGINE



Next Generation

Next Gen delivers you the inside info – the first to bring you X-Box specs, the first insider word on "free" consoles. Don't miss out on what's behind the scenes in the PC and video gaming world. Read what technology influencers reach for first!

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Sictek™

The only PC peripheral that actually sprays blood and chunks of human gore at you every time you make an onscreen kill.

> **"With the Bloodulator-3000, it's that time of the month ... every day!"**
> — *PC Accelerator*

> **"What will those bloody designers at Sictek come up with next?"**
> — *PC Gamer*

Now featuring:

- Expanded holding tank
- Comes in **black**, **blue**, and new **chartreuse** colors!
- Over 7,000 national blood banks and gore centers participating in our "Refill Program"
- Offer up to 70 straight hours of warm, dripping, coagulating fun! Let's get bloody!
- Already compatible with Sictek's two most popular games:
  - **Killinator 6 — The Deathening**
  - **Sparky McCabbleburg's Wacky Adventures in Cuddlyville**

Coming soon from Sictek:

The Spleentek-1 – The first PC Attachment that actually electrocutes your spleen!

The Labotomizer – 'nuff said.

Sictek™

In case you haven't guessed it this product is not real. This is a parody of over-the-top violence and is meant to make you giggle like a little girl. Senators and/or Presidents of the United States who use this ad as an example of what is wrong with the games industry are complete morons — but we already knew that. PC Accelerator is not responsible for you losing your lunch, desensitizing you, or for making you feel like a little girl.

Go to **http://pcxl.com/gaming411**: 911

WARNING: The Bloodulator-3000 may cause extreme fun and dangerous levels of hilarity!

FEEDBACK

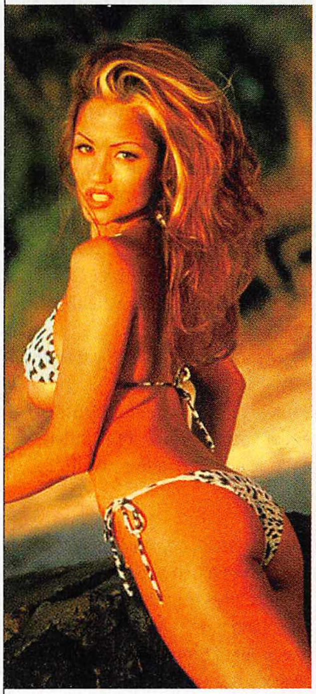
letters@pcxl.com

The day after news of our demise hit the web, we were flooded with e-mail from all over the globe. So, we threw out the old letters section and replaced it with just a few of the many, many reactions that came in, some of which were even printable. Here's what you had to say ...

NOTES TO IMAGINE

I enjoy almost every publication of Imagine Media. In my opinion as a loyal Imagine Entertainment consumer, cancelling **PCXL** is a HUGE mistake. Also, I am the store manager of a Babbage's Etc., ... I have customers calling my store to ask if the next **PCXL** is out yet. Why, you might ask, maybe because **PCXL** stands out from the crowd? Is Imagine Media afraid of breaking the mold? It is by far the most popular PC mag in our racks. I know that Imagine publishes 75% of the mags we sell at my store, but there are a few alternatives. Due to the cancellation of **PCXL** it will be very easy to direct customers to *CGW*, *Incite PC* etc. I will think long and hard about possibly cancelling my *NG* subscription.

Thank you for your time,
Jason Delleney



She wants more PCXL, too!

I can't believe that Imagine has made the decision to cancel **PCXL**. This has to be the stupidest thing Imagine has ever done. Sure, it caters to the male PC fan, but males make up the largest sector of the PC gaming market. Catering to this demographic has made **PCXL** the most original PC magazine ever created. And to keep *PC Gamer* over **PCXL** is a travesty unto itself. *PC Gamer* was original when it came out, but has failed to evolve almost any over the years. Plus, it's even stolen outright things from **PCXL** to keep up (Personal and PC problems? Who came up with that first?). PC Gamer is now a **PCXL** wannabe. Games, girls, and a cutting edge wit have made **PCXL** the best there is, and if you're too blind to choose a tired, retread, hack gaming rag like PC Gamer over **PCXL**, then it will be your loss as well as the **PCXL** fans.'

Lastly, I have been collecting most all of your magazines since each respective mag's first issue. I used to feel that you put quality and inventive ideas ahead of making a fast buck, but no more. I'm now going to put all my back issues except **PCXL** into the local recycling bin. Please consider myself a former Imagine customer.

Thank You
Pete Dixon

I know that one letter won't matter ... but I want Imagine Media to know that I am pissed about the cancellation of **PCXL**. There is no other mag on the market as fresh as **PCXL**. Every issue I got amazed me. I never made it one page without laughing my ass off. The reviews were pure strokes of genius. I'm not sure if I will ever be able to replace my beloved **PCXL**. Sure, there are mags out there that try to be like them (*Incite*), but none of them succeed at all. Basically I think this really sucks and can't believe that **PCXL** could die.

Cya...
Jacob Cousino

C'mon, Imagine. C'mon, **PCXL**. C'mon, don't go. Seriously. C'mon. Damn, this sucks.

Adam Mistler

PCXL was the ONLY no-compromise PC game mag on the market and I simply cannot believe that Imagine could reach a decision to stop publishing it. I wish the best to all the people involved in **PCXL**, I feel that you are all my family in a way, at least in that we share an enjoyment in the PC gaming industry and enjoy a brand of humor that apparently enough others do not quite understand. Lastly, someone please get their head out of their ass! When you have the BEST and most original mag on the market and you stop publishing it, you have to be a total moron.

Hail to the King Baby,
Chris Kimbrow

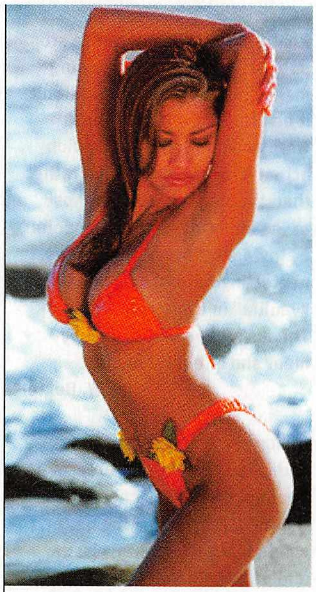
Please provide me with a refund of the difference of my subscription. I do not want *PC Gamer*. If I wanted *PC Gamer* I would have subscribed to it. Either this happens, or I start a campaign from my website to get ex- **PCXL**'rs to call into the Better Business Bureau and do everything in our power to not receive *PC Gamer*.

Regards,
Seth Krieg

I will boycott ALL Imagine Media magazines and websites forever. I will encourage others to do so as well. I don't believe the poor sales crap and low advertising revenues. I think some WOMAN screwed it up for all of us. Good luck to you all.

-ozone-

PS: I'll miss you guys ... and Gia too :)



I'd be sad, too, except I have this fine butt to think about.

THANKS FOR THE MAMMARIES

WHAT?! Oh man. Not that you already know ... but this sucks. I suppose I should thank you for your magazine now. And I will. **PCXL** is the best PC gaming magazine ever. I mean, come on, games, humor, hot chicks, ALL IN ONE MAGAZINE. All the other magazines suck a big fattie (feel free to quote me). Where the hell else are we gonna find pics of Gia Decarlo and hilarious gaming articles? I've lost all purpose to life. Well then. I should go. I'm getting all ferklempt. Sayonara.

Matt Nguyen

You are by far the most entertaining game magazine out there. Yours is the only mag that I read from cover to cover. I am always amused by the content. It's not the girls, but the fact that this is a mag written by people I can relate with. I do not know the reasoning behind this closure but I would be more than willing to pay more for the mag, I just don't want to lose the comical and inciteful angle that all the writers there have. Don't we have some say?

William H. Van Splunder

Dear readers, when you speak of us, and you will, please be kind (not that we ever were. Screw you!)

letters@pcxl.com

FEEDBACK

PCXL,
Really sorry to see you guys stop publishing the best PC gaming magazine on the shelf. Wouldn't it be nice for a change if hard work and quality in publication actually meant something, rather than the mags that brown-nose to the almighty advertising dollar by giving wishy-washy reviews, neglecting hard truths, and being "vanilla" in every respect? Thanks for two years of enjoyment and enlightenment!

W. Baxter

Hi, my name is John and I'm a dedicated reader from Greece. Your magazine was one of those things that made my life better. I would buy each month's issue and be certain that I would laugh! I was so excited about it, I showed it to everybody I know, being so proud that I discovered this great magazine. I really can't say how sad I am about this, my life is going to be so different. If there were anything I could do to make you continue, I'd do it.

John P.

You guys are the only gaming mag many of us in the game industry read. I used to work for a developer and have two roommates still working in the industry here in Raleigh. Your mag is the only print publication we subscribe to. (well, there is *Maxim*, but that's not a gaming mag...).

Good Luck Guys,
Jeremy

PLEASE GOD DON'T LEAVE US!!!!! Until I found you guys I was a geek without a voice! I am a loyal subscriber and I will be one of the many lost without you. Several in the "*Tribes* Community" are crying like babies over this. Is there anyway to save the only worthwhile publication on the planet?

JT Moody

This is unbelievable, but I guess all good things have to come to an end. Thanks for the good reviews, the hot babes, the hilarious "x-tras," and an all-around great time for the last two years. The magazine may have died because of "market concerns," but the spirit lives on!

Eric Prendergast

I started in on this wild ride near the very beginning. It's been wonderful in so many ways. Thanks for a great run fellas. Thanks for giving me humor with my info, or the other way around, and life into gaming. This will not be the last we hear from you I hope. I plan on remaining a reader of whatever ya'll decide to do.

PCXL forever,
Robert Romero Jr.

WORDS OF PRAISE

This is the worst thing to happen ever! *PC Accelerator* has been the only reason I read magazines. You guys were the funniest and best PC magazine out there, period!

Vin Yam

I'm gonna go seal my *PC Accelerator* issues in plastic wrap as they will soon skyrocket in value due to rarity. Good luck, guys, and don't give up on the idea you had with PCXL ...

Michael Sontag

Dammit!!! I'll subscribe with three more subscriptions. I'll get my friends to subscribe. Hell, I'll get my family, friends, and their families ... shit. Dammit. Don't goooo!!!!!

Ivan Jacobson

NOOOOOOOO!!!! I can't believe you guys are stopping the mag. That mag was my life. I began to read and got sucked into the mysterious wonder known as *PC Accelerator*. I can't believe it.

Dkillah

... even over here in Germany your fresh attitude will be missed.

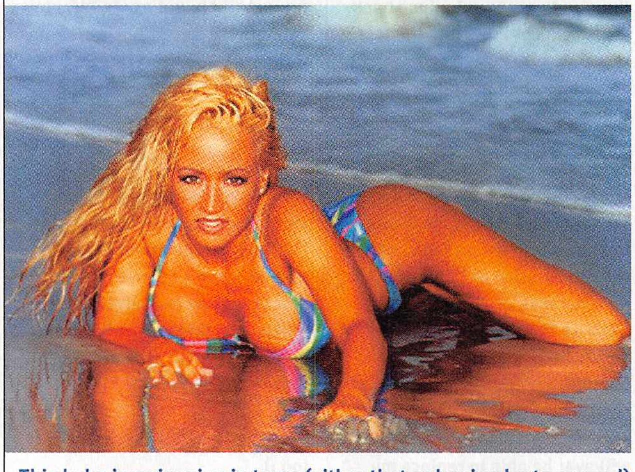
Regards,
Cal

When I found out that you guys were shutting down, it hit me like a death in the family. No more reading of drunken computer game exploits. No more honest and hard-hitting reviews. You guys will be sorely missed.

Sincerely,
Matthew Herlehy
Loyal reader from the very first issue

This makes no sense! I guess my local magazine rack was using PCXL to line birdcages or something, cause if I didn't get there in the first week after release each month, it was gone! I guess I just live in an extremely cool area.

Later,
Al "Dead-Meat" Miller



This babe is swimming in tears (either that or her implants popped).

... AND WORDS OF ASS

Thank God your print magazine has been terminated. I picked up last month's copy with the Worst Games Ever column to read while I was in the waiting room at the dentist for my root canal therapy and was apalled [sic] at what a degrading, sexist and uninformative rag it was. There was absolutely NO information contained within, only adolescent posturing, meaningless hints to games I don't care about and screenshots. Lots of screenshots. And plenty of descriptions of those screenshots. I think that the primary qualifications for writing for your magazine must be the ability to describe a screenshot and to not flinch when hearing juvenile sexist humor. Certainly there was not much journalism involved. In any event, nice going/you blew it/too bad/thank God, couldn't have happened to a better bunch of losers.

See you on the unemployment line.
Snyalnd

Hi, my name is Steve Valentine. I subscribed for a first free issue of *PC Accelerator* and if I didn't like it I wouldn't have to pay for the rest. So now I just got my first free issue, but it says I have to pay. Now my dad is really mad at me because it says I have to pay but it really should be free. I want you to please fix this problem, and stop sending me the *PC Accelerator* magazine. Thank you so much.

Steve Valentine

Your wish is our command, Steve. And if you can't have **PCXL**, then nobody else can, either. Well done!

Unfortunately, dear readers, there's not much anyone can do about all this. But thanks a lot, guys (and gals — we heard from a few of them too. We told ya!) Twasn't beauty that killed the beast, but a lack of MEN buying the mag. Later...

Anyone with a stupid name like "Snyalnd" would surely be found on the unemployment line

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Magazine

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5PXL7

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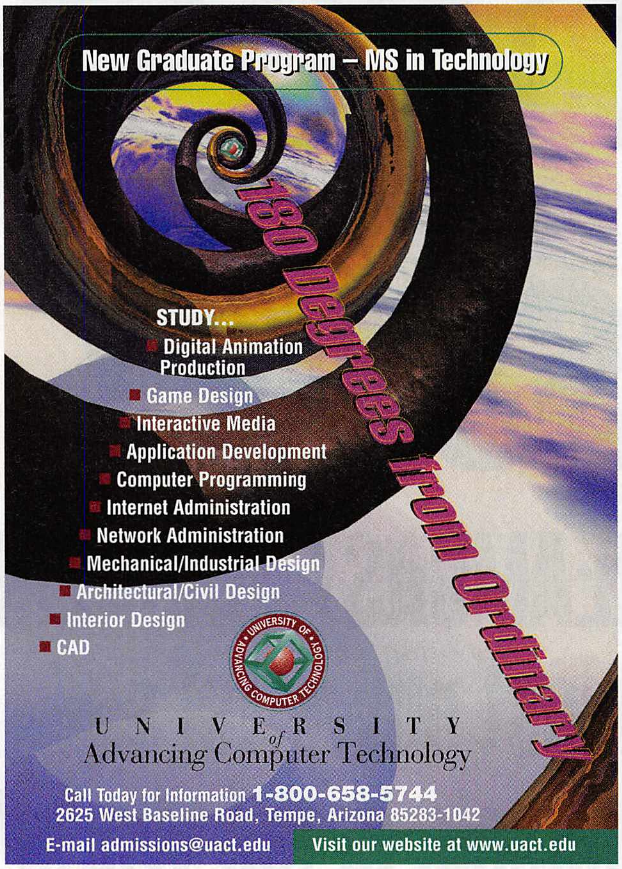
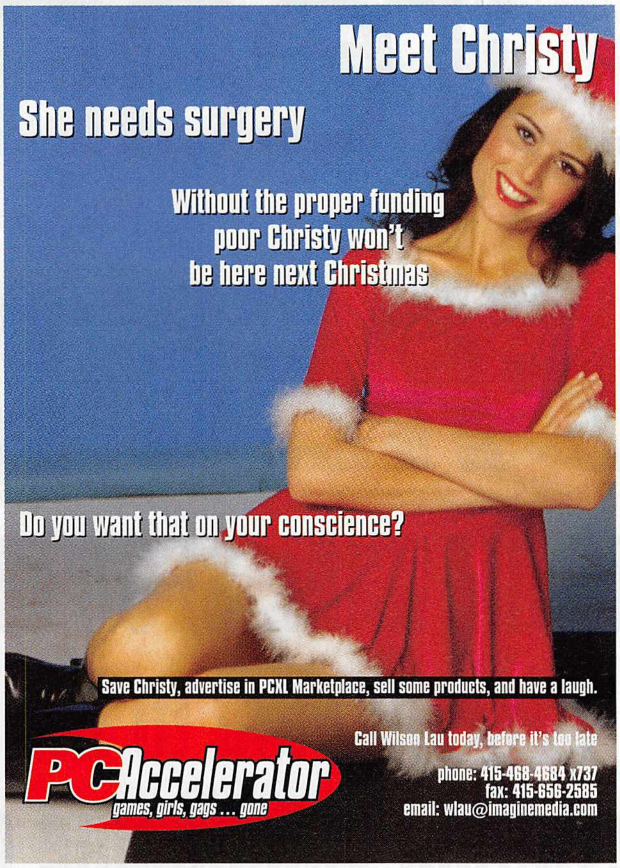
It's kinda like that thing in AOEII – you know buy some wood, sell some stone, etc.





Gaming 411

These sponsors make it possible for **PC ACCELERATOR** to exist. Without them we'd just be a bunch of loud-mouthed fools. We appreciate their advertising, but if they make a game that sucks, we WILL kill it. Nobody owns **PCXL**, but **PCXL**.

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I takes two to tango, but it takes five to play a really good game of party Twister.

ABERDEEN

The Straight Talk People℠

SINCE 1991

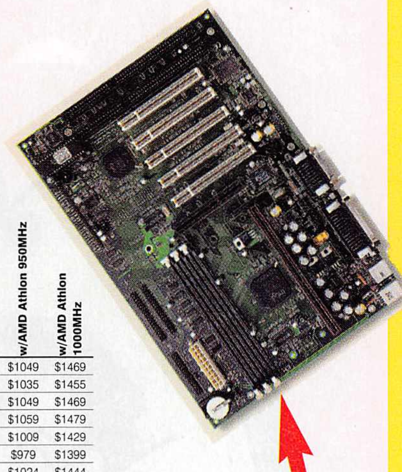
MOTHERBOARD GEEK HEAVEN!

Super7™

Super7™	Part Number	Chip Set	L2 Cache (KB)	Maximum Memory (MB)	168-pin DIMM Sockets	72-pin SIMM Sockets	Flash BIOS	Integrated Audio	Integrated Controller	PCI Slots	ISA Slots	AGP Slot	Format	Manufacturer's Warranty	Motherboard Only	w/AMD-K6-2/500	w/AMD-K6-2/550	w/Intel® Pentium® MMX™ 233MHz
Asus P5A-B	*MB5711*	ALi Aladdin V	512	384	3		Award			3	2	1	Baby AT	1 Yr.	$98	$157	$183	$143
EPoX EP-MVP3C2	*MB5406*	VIA Apollo MVP3	512	384	3		Award		UltraDMA/66	4	2	1	Baby AT	2 Yrs.	$82	$141	$167	$127
EPoX EP-MVP3G5	*MB5405*	VIA Apollo MVP3	2048	384	3		Award		UltraDMA/66	5	2	1	ATX	2 Yrs.	$106	$165	$191	$151
FIC PA-2013 (2MB Cache)	*MB5214*	VIA Apollo MVP3	2048	384	3		Award			4	2	1	ATX	1 Yr.	$103	$162	$188	$148
FIC VA-503+	*MB5211*	VIA Apollo MVP3	1024	512	2	4	Award			3	3	1	Baby AT	1 Yr.	$76	$135	$161	$121
Shuttle HOT-591P	*MB5611*	VIA Apollo MVP3	512	256	2	2	Award			3	3	1	Baby AT	1 Yr.	$77	$136	$162	$122
Tyan S1590S Trinity 100AT	*MB5006*	VIA Apollo MVP3	1024	384	3	2	Award			4	4	1	Mini AT	3 Yrs.	$95	$154	$180	$140
Tyan S1598 Trinity ATX	*MB5008*	VIA Apollo MVP3	2048	384	3		Award		UltraDMA/66	5	2	1	ATX	3 Yrs.	$121	$180	$206	$166

Slot A

Slot A	Part Number	Chip Set	Maximum Memory (MB)	168-pin DIMM Sockets	Flash BIOS	Bus Frequency	Integrated Controller	PCI Slots	ISA Slots	AGP Slot	Format	Manufacturer's Warranty	Motherboard Only	w/AMD Athlon™ 650MHz	w/AMD Athlon 700MHz	w/AMD Athlon 750MHz	w/AMD Athlon 800MHz	w/AMD Athlon 850MHz	w/AMD Athlon 900MHz	w/AMD Athlon 950MHz	w/AMD Athlon 1000MHz
ABIT KA7	*MB7501*	VIA Apollo KX133	2048	4	Award	200/133	UltraDMA/66	6	1	1	ATX	1 Yr.	$179	$369	$404	$464	$559	$689	$849	$1049	$1469
AMI Megathon	*MB7301*	AMD-751 / VIA 686A	768	3	Award	100	UltraDMA/66	5	1	1	ATX	1 Yr.	$165	$355	$390	$450	$545	$675	$835	$1035	$1455
Asus K7M	*MB7701*	AMD-751 / VIA 686A	768	3	Award	100/120/133	UltraDMA/66	5	1	1	ATX	1 Yr.	$179	$369	$404	$464	$559	$689	$849	$1049	$1469
Asus K7V	*MB7703*	VIA Apollo KX133	1536	3	Award	200/133	UltraDMA/66	5		1	ATX	1 Yr.	$189	$379	$414	$474	$569	$699	$859	$1059	$1479
EPoX EP-7KXA	*MB7850*	VIA Apollo KX133	768	3	Award	200/133	UltraDMA/66	5	1	1	ATX	2 Yrs.	$139	$329	$364	$424	$519	$649	$809	$1009	$1429
FIC SD11	*MB7401*	AMD-751 / VIA 686A	768	3	Award	100	UltraDMA/66	5	1	1	ATX	1 Yr.	$109	$299	$334	$394	$489	$619	$779	$979	$1399
Microstar K7 Pro	*MB7202*	AMD-750	768	3	Award	100	UltraDMA/66	6	1	1	ATX	1 Yr.	$154	$344	$379	$439	$534	$664	$824	$1024	$1444
Shuttle AI61	*MB7901*	AMD-750	768	3	Award	100	UltraDMA/66	5		1	MicroATX	1 Yr.	$125	$315	$350	$410	$505	$635	$795	$995	$1415
Tyan S2380 Trinity K7	*MB7000*	VIA Apollo KX133	768	3	Award	200/133	UltraDMA/66	6	1	1	ATX	3 Yrs.	$179	$369	$404	$464	$559	$689	$849	$1049	$1469



Socket 370

Socket 370	Part Number	Chip Set	Maximum Memory (MB)	168-pin DIMM Sockets	Flash BIOS	Integrated Audio	Integrated Video	PCI Slots	ISA Slots	AGP Slot	AMR Slot	Format	Manufacturer's Warranty	Motherboard Only	w/Intel® Celeron™ processor 500/A MHz 128K OD 66MHz FSB	w/Intel Celeron 566 128K OD 66MHz FSB	w/Intel Celeron 600 128K OD 66MHz FSB	w/Intel Celeron 633 128K OD 66MHz FSB	w/Dual Intel Celeron 633 128K OD 66MHz FSB	w/Intel Pentium® III 650/667 256K OD 100/133MHz FSB	w/Intel Pentium III 733 256K OD 133MHz FSB	w/Intel Pentium III 750 256K OD 100MHz FSB	w/Intel Pentium III 800/EB 256K OD 100/133MHz FSB	w/Intel Pentium III 866 256K OD 133MHz FSB
ABIT BP6 (Dual)	*MB6506*	Intel 440BX	768	3	Award			5	2	1		ATX	1 Yr.	$149	$234	$259	$284	$319	$489	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
ASUS CUC2000	*MB6724*	Intel® 820	1024	4	Award	AC-97		5	1	1	1	ATX	1 Yr.	$177	$262	$287	$312	$347	N/A	$407	$467	$577	$637	$847
EPoX EP-3VCA	*MB6854*	VIA Apollo Pro 133A	768	3	Award	AC-97		4	1	1	1	ATX	2 Yrs.	$105	$190	$215	$240	$275	N/A	$335	$395	$505	$565	$775
Shuttle ME64	*MB6310*	Intel 810E	512	2	Award	Intel 810E	Intel 810E	3			1	Micro ATX	1 Yr.	$116	$201	$226	$251	$286	N/A	$346	$406	$516	$576	$786
SuperMicro 370SCD	*MB6159*	Intel 820	512	2	AMI	AC-97		5		1	1	ATX	1 Yr.	$147	$232	$257	$282	$317	N/A	$377	$437	$547	$607	$817
SuperMicro 370SEA	*MB6140*	Intel 810E	512	2	AMI	Intel 810E	Intel 810E	6	1		1	ATX	1 Yr.	$146	$231	$256	$281	$316	N/A	$376	$436	$546	$606	$816
Tyan S1857 Trinity 371	*MB6017*	Intel 440BX	768	3	AMI			6	1	1		ATX	3 Yrs.	$105	$190	$215	$240	$275	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Tyan S1854 Trinity 400	*MB6018*	VIA Apollo Pro 133A	768	3	Award			6	1	1		ATX	3 Yrs.	$104	$189	$214	$239	$274	N/A	$334	$394	$504	$564	$774

Slot 1

Slot 1	Part Number	Chip Set	Maximum Memory (MB)	168-pin DIMM Sockets	168-pin RIMM Sockets	Flash BIOS	Integrated Audio	Integrated Controller	PCI Slots	ISA Slots	AGP Slot	Format	Manufacturer's Warranty	Motherboard Only	w/Intel® Pentium III® 550 512K 100MHz FSB	w/Intel Pentium III 650/667 256K OD 100/133MHz FSB	w/Intel Pentium III 700 256K OD 100MHz FSB	w/Intel Pentium III 733 256K OD 133MHz FSB	w/Intel Pentium III 750 256K OD 100MHz FSB	w/Intel Pentium III 800/EB 256K OD 100/133MHz FSB	w/Intel Pentium III 850 256K OD 100MHz FSB	w/Intel Pentium III 866 256K OD 133MHz FSB	w/Dual Intel Pentium III 550 512K 100MHz FSB	w/Dual Intel Pentium III 750 256K OD 100MHz FSB
ABIT BE6-II	*MB6508*	Intel 440BX	768	3		Award		UltraDMA/66	5	1	1	ATX	1 Yr.	$137	$332	$367	$427	N/A	$537	$597	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
ABIT BF6	*MB6507*	Intel 440BX	768	3		Award			6	1	1	ATX	1 Yr.	$116	$311	$346	$406	N/A	$516	$576	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
ABIT VA6	*MB6509*	VIA Apollo Pro 133	768	3		Award	AC-97	UltraDMA/66	5	2	1	ATX	1 Yr.	$89	$284	$319	$379	$389	$489	$549	$749	$759	N/A	N/A
ABIT VT6X4	*MB6510*	VIA Apollo Pro 133A	768	3		Award	AC-97	UltraDMA/66	5	2	1	ATX	1 Yr.	$108	$303	$338	$398	$408	$508	$568	$768	$778	N/A	N/A
Asus P2B-DS	*MB6707*	Intel 440BX	1024	4		Award			4	2	1	ATX	1 Yr.	$479	$674	$709	$769	N/A	$879	$939	N/A	N/A	$869	$1279
Asus P3B-F	*MB6720*	Intel 440BX	1024	4		Award			6	1	1	ATX	1 Yr.	$137	$332	$367	$427	N/A	$537	$597	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Asus P3C2000	*MB6722*	Intel 820	1024	4		Award	AC-97	UltraDMA/66	5	1	1	ATX	1 Yr.	$166	$361	$396	$456	$466	$566	$626	$826	$836	N/A	N/A
Asus P3V4X	*MB6723*	VIA Apollo Pro 133A	1024	4		Award		UltraDMA/66	6	1	1	ATX	1 Yr.	$118	$313	$348	$408	$418	$518	$578	$778	$788	N/A	N/A
EPoX EP-6VBA2	*MB6855*	VIA Apollo Pro 133A	768	3		Award	AC-97	UltraDMA/66	4	2	1	ATX	2 Yrs.	$109	$304	$339	$399	$409	$509	$569	$769	$779	N/A	N/A
FIC KA11	*MB6411*	VIA Apollo Pro 133A	1024	4		Award		UltraDMA/66	5	2	1	ATX	1 Yr.	$99	$294	$329	$389	$399	$499	$559	$759	$769	N/A	N/A
Intel CC820	*MB6919*	Intel 820	512	2		Intel/Phoenix		UltraDMA/66	5		1	ATX	3 Yrs.	$154	$349	$384	$444	$454	$554	$614	$814	$824	N/A	N/A
Intel SE440BX-2 "Seattle"	*MB6921*	Intel 440BX	768	3		Intel/Phoenix			4	2	1	ATX	3 Yrs.	$113	$308	$343	$403	N/A	$513	$573	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Shuttle AV64	*MB6309*	VIA Apollo Pro 133A	768	3		Award		UltraDMA/66	5	2	1	ATX	1 Yr.	$92	$287	$322	$382	$392	$492	$552	$752	$762	N/A	N/A
SuperMicro P6DGH	*MB6129*	Intel 440GX	2048	4		AMI		Adaptec 2-Ch U2W	9	2	1	Full AT	1 Yr.	$829	$1024	$1059	$1119	N/A	$1229	$1289	$1489	N/A	$1219	$1629
SuperMicro P6SBA	*MB6120*	Intel 440BX	768	3		AMI			4	3	1	ATX	1 Yr.	$104	$299	$334	$394	N/A	$504	$564	$764	N/A	N/A	N/A
SuperMicro P6SBU	*MB6128*	Intel 440BX	1024	4		AMI		Adaptec U2W	4	3	1	ATX	1 Yr.	$329	$524	$559	$619	N/A	$729	$789	$989	N/A	N/A	N/A
SuperMicro PIIIDM3	*MB6153*	Intel 840	4096	4		AMI	AC-97	Adaptec Ultra3/160	6		1	ATX	1 Yr.	$579	$774	$809	$869	$879	$979	$1039	$1239	$1249	$969	$1379
SuperMicro PIIIDME	*MB6151*	Intel 840	4096	4		AMI	AC-97	Intel PRO/100+	6		1	ATX	1 Yr.	$359	$554	$589	$649	$659	$759	$819	$1019	$1029	$749	$1159
SuperMicro PIIISCD	*MB6146*	Intel 820	512	2		AMI	AC-97	UltraDMA/66	5		1	ATX	1 Yr.	$152	$347	$382	$442	$452	$552	$612	$812	$822	N/A	N/A
SuperMicro PIIISED	*MB6142*	Intel 810e	512	2		AMI	AC-97	UltraDMA/66	6			ATX	1 Yr.	$123	$318	$353	$413	$423	$523	$583	$783	$793	N/A	N/A
Tyan S1854 Trinity 400	*MB6018*	VIA Apollo Pro 133A	768	3		Award		UltraDMA/66	6	1	1	ATX	3 Yrs.	$104	$299	$334	$394	$404	$504	$564	$764	$774	N/A	N/A

Slot 2

Slot 2	Part Number	Chip Set	Maximum Memory (MB)	168-pin DIMM Sockets	Flash BIOS	Integrated Audio	Integrated Controller	Integrated Networking	PCI Slots	ISA Slots	AGP Slot	Format	Manufacturer's Warranty	Motherboard Only	w/Intel® Pentium III® Xeon™ 550MHz 512K 100MHz FSB	w/Intel Xeon 550MHz 1M 100MHz FSB	w/Intel Xeon 550MHz 2M 100MHz FSB	w/Dual Intel Xeon 550MHz 512K 100MHz	w/Quad Intel Xeon 550MHz 512K 100MHz	w/Intel Xeon 700MHz 1M 100MHz FSB	w/Intel Xeon 700MHz 2M 100MHz FSB	w/Intel Xeon 800MHz 1M 100MHz FSB	w/Intel Xeon 800MHz 2M 100MHz FSB
SuperMicro S2DM3	*MB6156*	Intel 840	4096	4	AMI	AC-97	Adaptec Ultra3/160m	Intel PRO/100+	6		1	ATX	1 Yr.	$669	$1769	$2999	$5009	$2869	N/A	$2069	$3019	$3039	$5069
SuperMicro S2DME	*MB6160*	Intel 840	4096	4	AMI	AC-97		Intel PRO/100+	6		1	ATX	1 Yr.	$449	$1549	$2779	$4789	$2649	N/A	$1849	$2799	$2819	$4849
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FIRST PERSON

Are Games Too Violent?

What kind of a moron would even dare to ask that question? Are games too violent? Give me a frickin' break! It's life that's too violent! If we begin censoring extreme violence out of our games, how will we ever become desensitized to it in real life?

Games teach children and adults alike valuable, if violent, lessons. Don't get shot with a shotgun, don't try to use a rocket launcher in close quarters, and always beware of campers. These are just a few of the things that kids learn from violent video games. If anything, I say games aren't violent enough! I'm not going to be happy until every character in every game is anatomically correct and you can actually target specific organs in your enemy's body to blow up. I've got news for all you pansy-ass pacifists out there, violence is what made this country great and it's what continues to keep us on top. The day our country loses its bloodlust is the day we find ourselves taking orders from the commies.

America is rapidly becoming a nation of pale, sickly, politically correct wimps. Enough with the blame game already! Every time someone does something wrong, people point at games, music, and movies, but one fact they always leave out: Most games depict people using violence for good (killing Nazi's, saving the planet, killing co-workers, etc.). So my question (if you can stop hugging that tree long enough to listen, Jason) is this: Why don't people ever give props to games when someone does something positive, like killing a terrorist or saving the planet from flesh-eating zombies? If someone ever tries to take over the world, I think there are going to be a lot of people out there that are glad the "good" gamers of the world know the value of a crotch-shot and the proper way to use a flak cannon. It's easy to be a pacifist when you live in a fantasy world where nothing can touch you, but let me tell you mister, someone has to protect that world. Someone has to pay the ultimate price for your freedom.

There is nothing that irritates me more than getting mobbed by sissy peaceniks begging for protection from ravenous zombies. Without the trained killers of the videogame generation, we'd all be doomed.

— GARRETT "I VOLUNTEERED TO HAVE COW BLOOD THROWN ON ME" KENYON

SECOND PERSON

I think it's clear that there should be less violence in games because it teaches kids normally too stupid to learn anything in school how to go postal and kill people in the real world. This is like training an army of morons how to use nuclear weapons. Oh wait, the government already does that, but you understand my point. We didn't see a lot of these school shootings when kids weren't learning how to do it in games, most likely because they would kill each other experimenting with guns. That's natural selection, and is okay. But this school shooting situation is getting out of hand — next thing you know we'll lose dear Matt Holmes in a shootout at one of the high schools he cruises. Stop teaching our children how to murder, not for society's sake, but for the safety of the (former) **PCXL** staff.

— JASON "STUPID PEOPLE SHOULD DIE" SAMUEL

NEVER AGAIN

ALL GOOD THINGS MUST COME TO AN END

This is the last page ever printed in PCXL. We had a blast, but now that has passed. We hope you'll remember us fondly (or perhaps fondle yourself at our mammaries). We enjoyed the ride and thank all of you for coming along.

Chuck Osborn

Matthew Holmes

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Eric Smith

the end.

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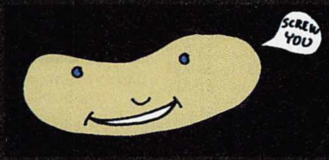

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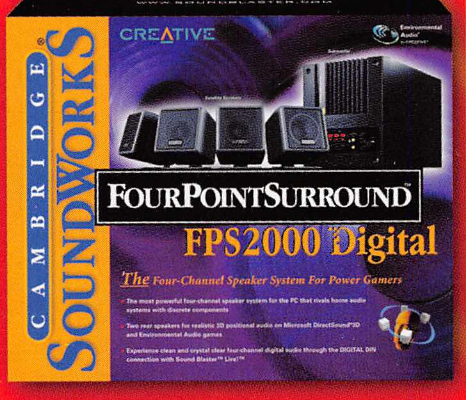

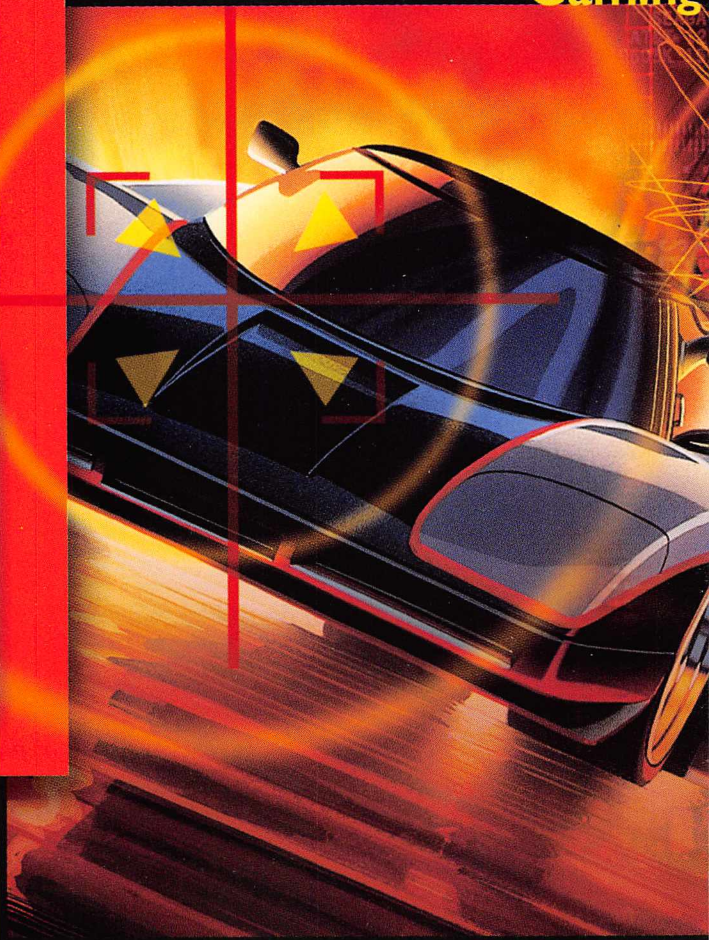

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We've had one hell of a run. Nearly two years, 22 issues, and countless laughs–but it's over. *PCXL*, as you know it, is dead. I would like to thank you for your incredibly refined taste in magazines. It has been an honor and a pleasure to write and produce every word (even the misspelled ones) in the past 22 issues.

We're moving to this thing they call the "Innerweb." We hear it is all the rage and what not. Keep your eyes on DailyRadar.com where the *PCXL* expatriates will launch a brand new web channel. Check out the web site, and believe me when I say you'll know our work when you see it. It's sad to put an end to *PCXL*, but "out of death there is life." You'll now be getting a daily dose of our signature wise-ass commentary and I guarantee it will be something completely original (guarantees aren't likely available in your state or province).

As for our subscribers, you'll be getting *PC Gamer* now and with our man Rob Smith (you know, the wacky Brit with the "problem") at the helm it's going to be damn good. If you already subscribe to *PC Gamer*, then you will get an extension on your current subscription. The guys at *Gamer* know their shit and other than *PCXL*, it is the most trustworthy, original and quality PC gaming magazine ever produced–over 375,000 readers can't be wrong, can they?

PCXL made a difference. We made people laugh and we changed the way gaming magazines are done. Hopefully we've left you in a much better place than when we first came on the scene nearly two years ago. Best of luck and many thanks for your continued support–you made all of our hard work worthwhile. And be sure to check out dailyradar.com to see what the hell we'll do next. You have no idea (of course, neither do we)!

Mike Salmon
The Artist Formerly Known As EIC of *PCXL*

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New *PC Gamer* subscriber,

It's sad but true: the *PC Accelerator* light that shone so brightly is now dark. But fear not! In place of that fine publication where I was Executive Editor before moving to this job you'll be joining the *PC Gamer* community, one of 375,000 readers who are the first to get the biggest news on the biggest games. You can expect the best stories, the most complete content and the most trustworthy reviews, and you can also expect an entertaining read.

At *PC Gamer*, we understand that games are about fun. We'll leave the stuffy attitude to the competition and get on with enjoying our hobby. We're all gamers, too! We also want to have fun with the hobby and present the information in a way that will keep you entertained for a full month until the next issue arrives in your mailbox.

So while we mourn the passing of a dearly departed friend, rest assured that the spirit lives on. *PC Gamer* will be your authoritative guide through the future of PC gaming–we're here to answer your questions, assuage your fears and get you excited about some of the great products on the horizon.

Welcome aboard.

Rob Smith
Editor-in-Chief, *PC Gamer*

A supplement to PC Accelerator magazine, June 2000.

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